



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management



NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY REPORT

Statewide Summary



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SEPT 1991

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THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON


RECORD OF DECISION

The following are the wilderness recommendations for 50 wilderness study areas (WSAs) in the State of New Mexico. These recommendations were developed from the findings of a 10-year wilderness study process by the Department of the Interior and Bureau of Land Management. The wilderness studies considered each area's resource values, present and proposed future uses of the area, public trust, the management of the area, and the consequences of designating or not designating the area as wilderness. The surveys were prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Bureau of Mines.

RECORD OF DECISION

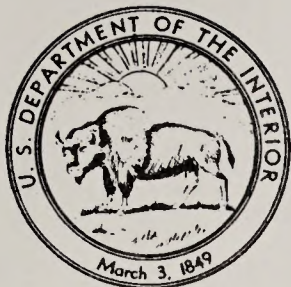
Based on our review of these studies, I have concluded that 43,135 acres within

the System and that 430,000 acres within 39 study areas should be released from wilderness study for uses other than wilderness. The acreage recommendations for each WSA, with which I concur, are listed in the following table. The Wilderness Study Report accompanying this decision includes a detailed discussion of the recommendations and maps showing the boundaries of each area.


Secretary of the Interior

235 19 1933

Date

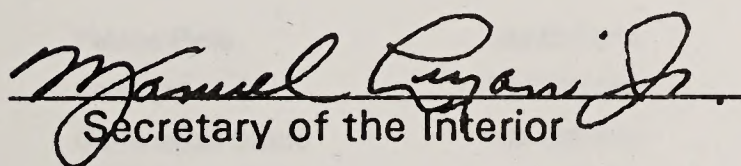


THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

RECORD OF DECISION

The following are the wilderness recommendations for 50 wilderness study areas (WSAs) in the State of New Mexico. These recommendations were developed from the findings of a 15-year wilderness study process by the Department of the Interior and Bureau of Land Management. The wilderness studies considered each area's resource values, present and projected future uses of the areas, public input, the manageability of the areas as wilderness, the environmental consequences of designating or not designating the areas as wilderness, and mineral surveys prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Bureau of Mines.

Based on our review of those studies, I have concluded that 487,186 acres within 23 study areas should be designated as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System and that 420,400 acres within 39 study areas should be released from wilderness study for uses other than wilderness. The acreage recommendations for each WSA, with which I concur, are listed in the following table. The Wilderness Study Report accompanying this decision includes a detailed discussion of the recommendations and maps showing the boundaries of each area.


Secretary of the Interior

AUG 19 1991

Date

New Mexico Wilderness Recommendation

Table 1

The following are the wilderness recommendations for 48 wilderness study areas and 2 instant study areas in the State of New Mexico. These recommendations are the culmination of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) wilderness study process. The wilderness studies considered each area's resource values, present and projected future uses, public input, the manageability of the area as wilderness, the environmental consequences of designating or not designating the area wilderness, and mineral surveys prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Bureau of Mines. Based on my review of those studies, I have concluded that 23 WSAs, totalling 487,186 acres of BLM land, should be designated as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System and that 420,400 acres within 39 areas should be released for uses other than wilderness. A detailed discussion of the recommendations is included in the attached wilderness study report and the recommendations are depicted on maps included in that report. Five final environmental impact statements covering 49 areas and 1 suitability report for the Mathers Instant Study Area accompany this decision. The acreage recommendations for each study area are as follows:

WSA Name	WSA Number	Study	Acres	Acres not
			Recommended	Recommended
			Wilderness	Wilderness
Ah-shi-sle-pah	NM-010-009	Statewide	0	6,563
Rio Chama	NM-010-059	Statewide	5,918	6,753
Sabinoso	NM-010-055	Statewide	0	15,760
San Antonio	NM-010-035	Statewide	0	7,050
Cabazon	NM-010-022	Statewide	8,159	0
Chamisa	NM-010-021	Statewide	15,758	844
Empedrado	NM-010-063	Statewide	9,007	0
Ignacio Chavez	NM-010-020	Statewide	33,609	0
La Lena	NM-010-063A	Statewide	10,438	0
Manzano (202)	NM-010-092	Statewide	881	0
Ojito	NM-010-024	Statewide	10,903	0
Petaca Pinta	NM-020-014	Statewide	10,631	1,037
Antelope	NM-020-053	Statewide	0	20,710
Continental Divide	NM-020-044	Statewide	37,599	31,162
Devil's Backbone	NM-020-047	Statewide	0	8,904
Eagle Peak	NM-020-019	Statewide	0	43,960
Horse Mountain	NM-020-043	Statewide	4,432	600
Jornada del Muerto	NM-020-055	Statewide	31,147	0
Mesita Blanca	NM-020-018	Statewide	0	19,414
Presilla	NM-020-037	Statewide	0	8,680
Sierra de las Canas	NM-020-038	Statewide	12,798	40
Sierra Ladrones	NM-020-016	Statewide	31,804	13,504
Stallion	NM-020-040	Statewide	0	24,238
Veranito	NM-020-035	Statewide	0	7,206

WSA Name	WSA Number	Study	Acres Recommended Wilderness	Acres not Recommended Wilderness
Aden Lava Flow	NM-030-053	Statewide	25,287	0
Alamo Hueco Mountains	NM-030-038	Statewide	0	16,264
Apache Box(202)	AZ-040-076	Arizona Mohave	0	932
Big Hatchet Mountains	NM-030-035	Statewide	45,374	20,498
Blue Creek	NM-030-026	Statewide	0	14,896
Cedar Mountains	NM-030-042	Statewide	0	14,911
Cooke's Range	NM-030-031	Statewide	0	19,608
Cowboy Spring	NM-030-007	Statewide	6,699	0
Florida Mountains	NM-030-034	Statewide	0	22,336
Gila Lower Box	NM-030-023	Statewide	5,835	2,720
Guadalupe Canyon	NM-ISA-001	Coronado National Forest	0	4,145
Las Uvas Mountains	NM-030-065	Statewide	0	11,067
Organ Mountains	NM-030-074	Statewide	7,283	0
Peloncillo Mountains	AZ-040-060	Safford District	0	4,061
Robledo Mountains	NM-030-063	Statewide	0	12,946
West Potrillo/Mt. Riley	NM-030-052	Statewide	148,540	8,645
 Brokeoff Mountains	 NM-030-112	 Statewide	 0	 31,606
Culp Canyon	NM-030-152	Statewide	0	10,937
 Carrizozo Lava Flow/ Little Black Peak	 NM-060-109 NM-060-110	 Statewide	 25,084	 1,075
Mathers	NM-ISA-003	Mathers Suitability Report	0	362
 Devil's Den Canyon (202)	 NM-060-145	 Lincoln National Forest	 0	 320
Lonesome Ridge (202)	NM-060-801	Lincoln National Forest	0	3,505
McKittrick Canyon (202)		Lincoln National Forest	0	200
Mudgetts (202)	NM-060-819	Statewide	0	2,941
 TOTAL ACRES BLM NEW MEXICO			 487,186	 420,400

STUDY OVERVIEW

WILDERNESS STUDY OVERVIEW

THE WILDERNESS REVIEW

This report culminates a 14-year effort by the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), to complete a wilderness review of public land in New Mexico as required by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976. Over 12 million acres of BLM land in New Mexico were inventoried to assess their wilderness characteristics. The BLM State Director in New Mexico determined that 1.2 million acres of this BLM land, in 57 individual areas, met the minimum wilderness criteria and were designated as wilderness study areas (WSAs).

The designated WSAs contain 5,000 acres or more of contiguous BLM land or are of sufficient size to make practical their preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; generally appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature; and provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined form of recreation. In addition, the WSAs may contain supplemental values consisting of ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historic value. The primary goal of the wilderness study process was to recommend wilderness designation those areas where wilderness was determined to be the most appropriate use of the land and its resources.

In 1984, Congress designated the Bisti and De-na-zin Wilderness Areas, totalling 26,400 acres of BLM land in New Mexico. In 1987, Congress designated the Cebolla and West Malpais Wilderness Areas, totalling 102,500 acres of BLM land, and designated as a WSA the Chain of Craters, totalling 18,300 acres of BLM land. This legislation also transferred 100,000 acres of the El Malpais Instant Study Area (ISA) to the National Park Service (NPS).

The wilderness designation of four areas and transfer of land in the El Malpais area to the NPS reduced the original 1.2 million acres of WSAs to approximately 925,000 acres in 51 areas. The wilderness recommendation for the Congressionally designated Chain of Craters WSA containing 18,300 acres will be reported in 1992 following completion of the wilderness study. The recommendation for the 362-acre Mathers Instant Study Area (ISA) was originally transmitted to the Congress on April 26, 1985. As there has been no action on this legislation, the Mathers ISA is being resubmitted as part of this Statewide package. Therefore, this report includes recommendations and rationales for 50 study areas, totalling 907,586 acres of BLM land in New Mexico. The total study acreage includes 4,788 acres of public land located outside the WSA boundaries but recommended suitable for wilderness designation. The completion dates and study acreage for each of the five wilderness studies completed for BLM WSAs in New Mexico are displayed on Table 1.

Instant Study Area

This report includes the final wilderness recommendation for the Guadalupe Canyon ISA and the Mathers ISA. The Guadalupe Canyon was designated an "Outstanding Natural Area (ONA)" by the New Mexico BLM State Director on August 13, 1971. Mathers was designated a "Natural Area" by the New Mexico BLM State Director on August 27, 1970. In accordance with Section 603 (a) of FLPMA, the Guadalupe Canyon ONA and the Mathers Natural Area were designated ISAs.

The Guadalupe Canyon ISA contains the 3,692-acre Guadalupe Canyon ONA and 454 acres of adjacent split-estate land (Federal surface/non-Federal subsurface ownership). The ISA was studied for wilderness suitability in a joint study with the Coronado

Table 1: List of Wilderness Studies

Name of Study	Draft EIS Filed	Final EIS Filed	Study Acreage
New Mexico Statewide	9/86	1/88	949,919
Arizona Mohave Safford District ¹	9/87	2/89	932
	6/83	4/87	4,061
Coronado National Forest	12/82	7/86	4,146
Lincoln National Forest	7/85	9/86	4,025

¹ The Peloncillo Mountains WSA is located in New Mexico and Arizona. Total acreage of the WSA in both states is 12,317 acres.

National Forest Bunk Robinson WSA and the BLM Baker Canyon WSA managed by the Safford District, Arizona. The environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Coronado National Forest Plan was completed in July 1986. The Guadalupe Canyon ISA is not recommended for wilderness designation. This recommendation is based on the nonsuitable recommendation for the contiguous U.S. Forest Service administered Bunk Robinson WSA. While the Guadalupe Canyon ISA contains high quality wilderness values, BLM believes management of the area as wilderness is contingent upon designating the contiguous Bunk Robinson WSA wilderness.

The Mathers ISA covers the entire 362-acre Mathers Natural Area. During the review, BLM determined the ISA was of insufficient size for wilderness preservation, was bisected by a major improved road, and lacked outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. The Mathers Suitability Report is included as Appendix 1.

Wilderness Study Areas Less Than 5,000 Acres In Size

This report includes a category of WSAs that have wilderness characteristics only when combined with contiguous National Park Service land in New Mexico or when combined with the contiguous U.S.

Forest Service land in New Mexico. The BLM land was selected for wilderness study under the planning authority of Section 202 of FLPMA. The six WSAs studied under this authority, including the recommendation, lead agency in the study process, and name of the study are displayed on Table 2.

Generally, the Section 202 WSAs in New Mexico were studied using the same process used for the other New Mexico WSAs. The value of each area as wilderness was compared to the multiple-use value of the area for other purposes. An EIS was prepared. Since the Section 202 WSAs depend on the lands of another agency to qualify for wilderness consideration, that agency's management plans and policies were an important factor in determining if the area was recommended for wilderness designation.

In all but one of the six Section 202 WSAs, the recommendation is not to designate the area as wilderness. These WSAs were either contiguous to U.S. Forest Service WSAs recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation or, in the case of the Mudgetts WSA, had high potential for the occurrence of oil and gas resources. The recommendation for the Manzano WSA is to designate the entire area as wilderness and to add it to the Cibola National Forest's Manzano Mountain Wilderness. The

WSA represents a natural extension to the existing 36,785-acre Manzano Mountain Wilderness, and management by one agency will reduce overall administrative costs.

New Mexico WSA Included In Arizona Wilderness Study

The Peloncillo Mountains WSA, studied under the authority of Section 603 of FLPMA, straddles the Arizona and New Mexico state line. The Peloncillo Mountains WSA totals 12,317 acres of BLM land, with 4,061 acres in New Mexico and the remainder in Arizona. The WSA was studied as part of the Safford District Wilderness EIS. In November of 1990, 19,650 acres of the Peloncillo Mountains were designated as wilderness. This included the entire Peloncillo WSA in Arizona. Only those acres located in New Mexico are now being officially reported in this document.

New Mexico Wilderness Recommendations

The Secretary of the Interior's recommendations are to designate 487,186 acres as wilderness and re-

lease 420,400 acres to other multiple-use activities. This recommendation will:

- Establish 22 new wilderness units and add acreage to 1 existing wilderness unit spanning a wide variety of New Mexico's landforms, ecosystems, and other natural features.
- Improve the geographic distribution of wilderness areas and complement existing areas of Federal wilderness.
- Increase nationwide ecosystem diversity.
- Ensure protection for the remaining areas in New Mexico which provide outstanding opportunities for the growing population to experience solitude or a primitive and unconfined recreation experience.

At the same time, this recommendation will release all of 27 units and parts of 12 others having potential for mineral and energy resources, nonwilderness recreation, utility corridors, and other land uses. The lands not recommended for wilderness also

Table 2: Section 202 Wilderness Studies

WSA Name	WSA Number	Acres		Lead Agency/Study Name
		Recommended Wilderness	Recommended Not Wilderness	
Apache Box	AZ-040-076	0	932	BLM/Arizona Mohave
Lonesome Ridge	NM-060-801	0	3,505	U.S. Forest Service/ Lincoln National Forest
Devil's Den Canyon	NM-060-145	0	320	U.S. Forest Service/ Lincoln National Forest
McKittrick Canyon	NM-060-146	0	200	U.S. Forest Service/ Lincoln National Forest
Mudgetts	NM-060-819	0	2,941	BLM/New Mexico Statewide
Manzano	NM-010-092	881	0	BLM/New Mexico Statewide

generally have lower quality wilderness values which would not enhance the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) or were determined by BLM to be unmanageable as wilderness due to land status or existing private rights in the area. Management of nonwilderness areas will be consistent with multiple-use objectives as prescribed in resource management plans (RMPs).

Reviewers commenting on the EISs included national and Statewide environmental organizations, State agencies, local governments and Indian Tribes, industry groups, sportsmen, recreational interests, ranchers, utility companies, as well as concerned citizens. A special review was provided for the New Mexico Governor to ensure the recommendations were consistent with State plans and policies.

The Secretary of the Interior is recommending wilderness designation for those areas possessing wilderness values and multiple resource benefits which are capable of balancing the benefits which could be foregone as a result of wilderness designation. In addition, all areas recommended for wilderness designation were determined by the BLM to be capable of being managed as wilderness over the long-term.

KEY ISSUES AND MAJOR CONCLUSIONS

On a Statewide basis, the BLM identified three resource issues. These issues and the potential impact resulting from implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary of the Interior are as follows.

Impacts On Wilderness Values

Wilderness values would be maintained on 487,186 acres in 23 individual areas. Improvement in the quality of naturalness would result from closure of approximately 200 miles of existing vehicle routes.

Solitude and primitive recreation opportunities would be maintained on 54 percent of the acreage under wilderness review. Recreation opportunities include rafting, backpacking, rock climbing, hunting, fishing, and nature photography.

Archeological sites, raptor habitat, bighorn sheep habitat, unique vegetation communities, and opportunities to study melanistic species would be preserved. There would be 17 new ecosystems added to the NWPS. The ecosystems within the Chihuahuan Desert Province, Colorado Plateau Province, and Mexican Highlands Shrub Steppe Province would be the first of their type to be included in the system.

Wilderness values, including naturalness, solitude, and recreation opportunities, would be diminished on 420,400 acres not recommended for wilderness designation. This would result from energy and mineral exploration and development, intensive livestock management, and off-road vehicle use.

Impacts on Mineral and Energy Exploration and Development

When the wilderness studies were conducted in New Mexico, BLM Geologists used the best available mineral resource information to evaluate impacts. Since completion of these wilderness studies, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and U.S. Bureau of Mines completed their mineral surveys in each of the WSAs recommended for wilderness designation and conducted a literature search on all the remaining areas. This mineral resource data either confirmed BLM's assessment of mineral resource potential or strengthened the rationales against wilderness designation where mineral resource potential was a factor. Statewide impacts did not change. However, in order to provide the decision maker with the most current information about mineral resource potential, the wilderness study reports for each WSA have been updated.

The mineral resource potential for each WSA and the differences that were identified in the USGS and U.S. Bureau of Mines data are displayed in Appendix 2.

Because all 23 WSAs recommended for wilderness designation in this report were evaluated in the New Mexico Statewide Wilderness Study, information obtained from that study is used in describing mineral resource impacts.

The recommendation would withdraw approximately 0.3 of 1 percent of New Mexico's known petroleum provinces and approximately 1 percent of other areas with high to moderate potential for oil and gas resources. Although no existing geothermal or coal leases would be encumbered, about 0.5 of 1 percent of the most favorable geothermal and coal resource areas would be withdrawn.

Withdrawal of 1.5 to 2.0 percent of New Mexico's bismuth, manganese, lead, tellurium, and zinc mineral resource areas and approximately 1 percent of New Mexico's copper, molybdenum, and tungsten mineral resource areas would occur under the recommendation.

Impacts to nonmetallic mineral resources will be limited to fluorite and barite due to the relative abundance and remote locations of the majority of the other industrial minerals found in the WSAs. The recommendation would withdraw 1.5 percent and 3.3 percent of New Mexico's fluorite and barite resources, respectively. The bulk of New Mexico's fluorite and barite resources are currently withdrawn and lie within the boundaries of the White Sands Missile Range. Although New Mexico's known fluorite deposits form a substantial portion of the United States reserve base, presently identified barite resources in New Mexico are not especially impressive. The barite deposits in New Mexico tend to occur along the Rio Grande rift zone in small vein and replacement deposits, while more important deposits in Nevada and California occur as massive bedded sedimentary deposits. The recommendation may impact local opportunities to develop eco-

nomic fluorite and barite resources, but no impacts of a Statewide or National scale are anticipated.

Impacts on Livestock Grazing Use Levels

Less than 1 percent of the 64 million acres of land in the State used for livestock grazing would be impacted. Because this percentage is considered low, no significant Statewide impacts are anticipated. There will be no change in livestock grazing use levels simply because an area is designated wilderness. The biggest impact would be inconvenience to the livestock operator because vehicle use on approximately 200 miles of vehicle routes would be eliminated or sharply curtailed. Of this amount, it is estimated that approximately 65 miles of these vehicle routes are specifically used by livestock operators to drive vehicles to rangeland developments, to distribute salt or feed supplement, or to check livestock distribution and condition.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT

The public was invited to participate throughout the wilderness study process. Opportunities for public participation were provided through:

- Workshops to consider criteria and to review preliminary maps during the Inventory Phase of the Wilderness Review Process.
- Hearings throughout the State on inventory findings.
- Review of draft and final wilderness EISs.
- Hearings where testimony was taken on draft wilderness EISs.

Public input was received on all sides of the wilderness issue and focused both on site-specific con-

cerns as well as broader, philosophical issues. It is clear from comments received that the public generally supports wilderness designations in New Mexico. It is not surprising, however, that groups and individuals are sharply divided over how much wilderness should be designated, which areas are appropriate for designation, and whether inclusion in the NWPS is the best means available to protect natural values and open space.

Involvement During the Wilderness Inventory

From March 31 through July 21, 1980, comments on the Wilderness Study Proposals were solicited in a variety of ways. Approximately 3,000 copies of *New Mexico Wilderness Study Proposals* were distributed throughout the State; the back cover of this document contained a postage-paid comment sheet. Open houses to explain the BLM's proposals were held in eight selected locations throughout the State in early April. Public meetings to solicit oral comments were also held in ten selected locations in May and June. Numerous personal contacts were made with individuals, special interest groups, and State and local government officials. In addition, BLM encouraged written comments as the primary input method.

The BLM's effort resulted in the reception of about 700 personal letters, 700 form letters, and 2,300 coupons. These coupons were attached to a poster which was distributed nationally by a special interest group. People were asked to remove the coupon, which had a standard printed message, sign it, and send it to the appropriate State Director.

All comments, written and oral, were analyzed by an inter-district team in the New Mexico State Office in Santa Fe. Oral comments were transcribed and analyzed with the written input. The analysis did not involve vote counting. Comments were analyzed for the information they contained relevant to wilderness characteristics of specific areas. Large numbers of form letters or petitions which merely supported or opposed wilderness study status, without supporting reasons, were of little use. However,

a single letter or testimony which offered new information on the wilderness characteristics of a particular area could have resulted in a change in the final decision.

Information on other land uses or conflicts with wilderness were not considered until the study phase of the Wilderness Review Process. This type of information had no bearing on the identification of WSAs, but was retained for future use.

Following the analysis, comments providing new information were field-checked to verify their accuracy. Once verified, this new information was incorporated into the permanent documentation file of the appropriate area before a final decision was made.

Public comments were used to help the decision maker determine whether or not an area had wilderness characteristics. The final wilderness study decision was based not on the comments themselves, but on whether or not an area had wilderness characteristics.

Involvement During the Wilderness Study

The identification of issues began in 1980 when BLM formulated the New Mexico Wilderness Study Area Decisions. Issues were further refined as part of each Wilderness EIS scoping process. The involvement process for each of the wilderness study efforts is summarized on the following pages.

New Mexico Statewide Study

The New Mexico Statewide Wilderness Study included 43 of the 51 WSAs included in this report. Public scoping actions for the Draft EIS were conducted from July through December 1984. Major actions included distribution of information brochures, open house meetings, small group meetings, and discussions with representatives of

various interest groups and agencies. Other actions to inform the public of review and comment opportunities included issuance of news releases, public service announcements, and radio and television interviews.

Brochures describing the proposed issues and alternatives for the Statewide Wilderness EIS were mailed to 3,500 members of the public. The brochures also included invitations to submit written or verbal comments and to attend seven open house meetings. These meetings were held between September 11 and 20, 1984, in Taos, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Socorro, Las Cruces, and Roswell, New Mexico and El Paso, Texas.

A total of 137 people attended the 7 scoping meetings. The majority of comment at these meetings was general and did not relate specifically to the alternatives and issues to be analyzed. Common general comments were: questions on wilderness analysis and designation procedures; recommendation that all WSAs be designated wilderness; recommendation that no WSAs be designated wilderness; site-specific interests in designation or nondesignation; and disagreement with the acreage listed in BLM's proposed alternatives.

On May 1, 1985, BLM issued for comment a Draft EIS for the New Mexico Statewide Wilderness Study. This document was prepared before the decision was made to study split-estate land (Federal surface/non-Federal Subsurface) and areas less than 5,000 acres in size. Because this decision affected 19 WSAs and added approximately 150,000 acres to the Statewide study, a major revision was necessary. The BLM decided to use comments on the Draft EIS as additional scoping input and to make revisions to the entire Draft EIS. As a result, a Revised Draft EIS was prepared covering all the acreage in all the WSAs in the Statewide Wilderness Study.

The 90-day public comment period on the Draft EIS resulted in 465 responses. This included hearing testimony that was given by 28 respondents. The

remaining responses were letters and a few BLM response forms. One petition was received. The New Mexico BLM Wilderness Coalition submitted Alternative W, a proposal for 1.3 million acres of wilderness. A large number of letters in support of Alternative W and in support of specific WSAs appeared to be the result of a write-in campaign initiated by the New Mexico BLM Wilderness Coalition. These letters were individually composed by each respondent and were subsequently not identified or counted as form letters. However, each letter contained almost identical opinions and reasons.

Approximately 90 percent of the respondents commented on the alternatives. A majority (73 percent of the respondents) favored Alternative W. The All Wilderness Alternative was favored by 17 percent of those commenting. Other alternatives were each supported by 1-2 percent of the respondents.

The most frequently used reasons for supporting Alternative W and the All Wilderness Alternative were:

- The nation and New Mexico need more wilderness areas.
- BLM overstated manageability problems in reaching the preferred alternative.
- Designation of additional areas will not adversely impact other uses.
- Mineral and grazing values are low and there would be no major conflicts with wilderness.
- The value of wilderness outweighs the value of other resources or uses.
- Designation of more areas will protect unique ecosystems, wildlife, paleontological, scientific, and scenic values.

Another major reason for supporting more wilderness than the BLM preferred alternative was re-

flected in comments on the adequacy of the analysis. Many respondents said the recommendations were not supported by the analysis. They said the analysis led to a conclusion of suitability for many areas, but the BLM recommended them nonsuitable.

The most frequent reasons given for support of no wilderness or less wilderness than the preferred alternative were:

- The Nation or New Mexico has enough wilderness areas.
- Designation will adversely affect the minerals or livestock industry.
- It will cause adverse impacts on the economy.
- Areas would be difficult to manage.
- Designation would be incompatible with the multiple-use concept.

In addition to comments on alternatives, comments were made on the data and analysis in the Draft EIS. There were 40 respondents that commented on the acceptability of the data included in the EIS; 10 felt the data were satisfactory and 30 said essential data were missing or poor. Those who were dissatisfied with the data emphasized that the minerals and recreation data were weak. The adequacy of the analysis in the EIS was commented on by 70 people; 25 felt the analysis was adequate, and 45 said it was inadequate.

Those who felt the analysis was inadequate gave the following major reasons:

- Analysis seemed adequate but recommendations did not logically follow.
- Areas were unjustifiably recommended nonsuitable for wilderness.

- Value of wilderness was not adequately considered.
- Too much weight was placed on nonwilderness values.
- Need more in-depth analysis.
- Study should have considered split-estate and areas with less than 5,000 acres.
- Manageability is not a justifiable reason to recommend nondesignation.
- BLM recommended only the most outstanding areas.

Comments on the Revised Draft EIS were obtained from the general public, citizens groups, and governmental agencies during the September 2 through December 12, 1986 comment period. During the comment period, oral testimony was also obtained at public hearings held in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and Las Cruces, New Mexico.

A total of 751 oral and written responses were obtained. Of the 751 responses, 385 respondents commented on alternatives. Two alternatives, which were not evaluated in the Revised Draft EIS, were raised by a significant number of respondents. These alternatives are the New Mexico BLM Wilderness Coalition proposal and the Earth First! proposal. Approximately 48 percent of the respondents who commented on alternatives supported the Wilderness Coalition proposal. This proposal was updated from what was identified during the Draft EIS public comment period and identified approximately 1.8 million acres as suitable for wilderness designation. This acreage exceeded the BLM All Wilderness proposal. In addition to the BLM WSAs, the Wilderness Coalition proposed for wilderness some former BLM inventory units that were not designated as WSAs, five areas originally studied by the U.S. Forest Service, and substantial acreage of State and Federal lands contiguous to the WSAs.

Approximately 16 percent of the respondents who commented on alternatives favored the Earth First! proposal. This proposal identified approximately 5 million acres as suitable for wilderness designation. This proposal included an approach similar to the Wilderness Coalition with additional emphasis on combining WSAs and including land that currently lack natural qualities.

Other comments on alternatives included support by 8 percent of the respondents for the All Wilderness Alternative, support by 26 percent for the No Wilderness Alternative, and support for the Proposed Action by 2 percent of the respondents. There were no comments on the Emphasis on Manageability or Conflict Resolution Alternatives.

Comments on the adequacy of the analysis and adequacy of the data tended to focus on site-specific issues of the individual WSAs. The written comments and hearing transcripts requiring a response are reprinted in the Final EIS.

Arizona Mohave

The Apache Box WSA, located in southwestern New Mexico, was 1 of 15 WSAs administered by BLM in Arizona which were dropped from study by a decision of the Secretary of the Interior in 1982. As a result of a court decision in 1985 (*Sierra Club vs. Watt*), these 15 areas were reinstated in the study process. The Arizona Mohave Wilderness EIS was prepared by the Phoenix and Safford Districts in Arizona. The Districts invited public participation throughout the review process.

In September 1986, letters announcing the start of the wilderness study were mailed to 2,500 individuals, groups, local and State government, other Federal agencies, and Indian tribal leaders. In October 1986, meetings were held in Kingman and Phoenix, Arizona.

The public comment period on the Draft EIS was held from October 9, 1987 to January 8, 1988. More than 1,300 copies of the Draft EIS were distributed.

News releases provided information about obtaining copies of the Draft EIS and time, date, and locations of the scheduled public hearings.

BLM held public hearings in Clifton, Kingman, and Phoenix, Arizona, and Silver City, New Mexico. The written comments and hearing transcripts requiring a response are reprinted in the Final EIS. No elected officials, Indian tribes, or local agencies submitted written comments.

During the public comment period on the *Arizona Mohave Draft Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement* (1987), BLM received comments from 10 individuals who specifically addressed the Apache Box WSA. Five commenters supported wilderness designation, four opposed it, and one offered no position. Those supporting wilderness designation cited the area's outstanding scenery, protection of cultural resources, and proximity of the Hell's Hole WSA. Those opposing wilderness designation cited the area's small size and potential for conflict with mineral exploration and development as supporting reasons.

Safford District

The Peloncillo Mountains WSA straddles the New Mexico/Arizona state line. The WSA totals 12,317 acres of land, with 4,061 acres in New Mexico and the remainder in Arizona. The Peloncillo Mountains WSA was studied as part of Arizona's Safford District Wilderness EIS. Public comments were gathered through workshops in Safford, Tucson, and Globe, Arizona; personal contacts; news releases; and mailings to agencies, individuals, businesses, and other groups on the Safford District wilderness mailing list. The major emphasis of this public involvement process was to identify issues for the EIS and the development of alternatives.

The Draft EIS was filed with the Environmental Protection Agency on May 27, 1983, and the public comment period ended on August 31, 1983. There were 950 copies of the Draft EIS distributed to the public. News releases were issued identifying the

review period, when and where public hearings would be held, and how to obtain copies of the document.

Public hearings were held in Safford, Tucson, and Phoenix, Arizona, and in Lordsburg, New Mexico. Testimony at the hearings was presented by 31 people. A total of 269 inputs were received from various agencies, organizations, businesses, and individuals.

A total of 12 individuals and organizations commented specifically on the Peloncillo Mountains WSA. Eight favored wilderness designation, two opposed it and two offered no position. Those favoring designation cited the area's rugged terrain, outstanding scenery and opportunities for solitude, the naturalness of the area, and the raptor breeding habitat in the mountains. Those opposing designation felt that the wilderness analysis report (WAR) was deficient in minerals information and that the boundary conflicted with a planned utility corridor. Commenters also offered additional information concerning the rock rattlesnake and coatimundi in the WSA.

In November of 1990, a Statewide wilderness bill was passed which designated 19,650 acres as wilderness. This new wilderness area encompasses all of the Peloncillo Mountain WSA in Arizona. The portion in New Mexico remains in WSA status and is still being recommended as nonsuitable.

Coronado National Forest Plan

The Guadalupe Canyon ISA was studied for wilderness suitability in a joint study with the Coronado National Forest Bunk Robinson WSA and the BLM Baker Canyon WSA managed by the Safford District, Arizona. Lead agency for the planning effort was the U.S. Forest Service. The public involvement process for the Coronado National Forest was begun in March 1978. Organizations were used as primary means of contacting people to invite them to get involved in Forest Service planning. A letter

inviting participation was sent to 1,002 organizations in southeastern Arizona. Ten percent of the groups responded. Individuals who held Forest Service permits for grazing, special uses, etc., were added to the mailing lists along with individuals solicited through organization newsletter articles, newspaper stories, radio, public service advertisements, and organization mailing lists, for a total of 3,200 people and organizations. An invitation to 12 public workshops held throughout southeastern Arizona during the Spring of 1978 was sent to names on the mailing list. The invitations included a response form enabling individuals unable to attend the meetings to make comments. A total of 253 response forms and 745 letters were received. Almost 500 people attended the workshops.

In December 1982, the Coronado National Forest Plan and Draft EIS were released for public review. Over 2,500 responses were received during the development and review of these documents. Direction from the Secretary of Agriculture prompted another public involvement phase relative to the wilderness issue and the re-evaluation of roadless areas. During August 1983, Statewide and local meetings were held.

During the public comment period on the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Proposed Coronado National Forest Plan* (Forest Service 1988), numerous comments were received concerning wilderness designation of the Bunk Robinson/Guadalupe Canyon/Baker Canyon complex. The Forest Service did not summarize comments except to say that the local residents opposed wilderness designation while commenters from over 100 miles away favored wilderness designation.

While not included in the *New Mexico Statewide Wilderness Study: Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (BLM 1986), specific comments on the Guadalupe Canyon ISA were made by 22 commenters. All 22 commenters were in favor of wilderness designation.

Reasons supporting the Guadalupe Canyon area as wilderness included: value of wilderness values outweighs value of other resources; Nation needs more wilderness; designation will not adversely impact other resources; area favored, but boundaries should be enlarged; high scenic values; value of wilderness was not adequately considered; need more ecological diversity in the Wilderness system; will protect cultural values; will protect resources from overuse; area meets the wilderness criteria (naturalness, solitude, and size); and complements adjacent designated wilderness areas.

Lincoln National Forest Plan

Following reinstatement of Devil's Den Canyon, McKittrick Canyon, and Lonesome Ridge WSAs, an interagency agreement between BLM and the U.S. Forest Service was approved to jointly study these WSAs in conjunction with study of the Guadalupe Escarpment WSA. The joint study was conducted as part of the Lincoln National Forest Plan and the Final EIS was released on October 31, 1986. Lead agency on the planning effort was the U.S. Forest Service.

Public involvement activities for the Lincoln National Forest Plan and RMP were begun in January, 1980. A mailing list was developed from lists of persons and organizations known to have visited, used, or been interested in the Forest, including: fuelwood cutters, both commercial and private; grazing permittees; recreation users (cyclists, hikers, ORV users); Christmas tree cutters, the news media; schools, colleges, and universities; Federal, State, and local agencies; and local industries. On March 15, 1980, the list of planning issues, concerns, and opportunities was sent to 3,400 people on the mailing list, with a response deadline of April 15, 1980. Approximately 2,800 comments from 432 respondents were received and analyzed. In May 1980, meetings were held in Roswell, Carlsbad, Ruidoso, Weed, Alamogordo, Las Cruces, Cloudcroft, and Mayhill, New Mexico, and El Paso, Texas. Approximately 200 people attended these meetings.

The Proposed Lincoln National Forest Plan and EIS were released for review on June 29, 1985. Approximately 500 packets consisting of the Plan, the EIS, and a summary of the EIS were mailed, and an additional 250 summaries were sent to people who asked not to receive the complete packet. About 125 additional packets were distributed during and after the comment period.

The formal comment period ended on October 18, 1985, although comments received to April 1, 1986, were considered. Eighty-two letters were received and their contents analyzed.

Wilderness designation for this area was supported to limit impacts from mineral development activities and to preserve part of the geologic integrity of the Capitan Reef Formation because of the WSA's proximity to existing wilderness in the Guadalupe Mountains National Park. Three general comment letters were received that stated opposition to any new wilderness designations in southern New Mexico. Reasons for opposition were hardship on local ranchers, reduced utilization of areas, and loss of motorized access for camping, wood collecting, and sightseeing.

WILDERNESS AREAS IN NEW MEXICO

As of January 1, 1990, Congress had designated 90.8 million acres of Federal land as wilderness. More than 60 percent of the Nation's designated wilderness (56.5 million acres) is in Alaska, and includes most of the wilderness areas managed by the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. More than a third of the National Wilderness Preservation System is managed by the U.S. Forest Service, including 80 percent of the wilderness area outside Alaska.

Approximately 1.6 million acres, or 1.77 percent of the Nation's designated wilderness, is in New Mexico. In the neighboring states of Arizona, Colorado, and Texas, there are approximately 4.8 million acres of designated wilderness. Within this four State area, there are a total of 6.4 million acres of desig-

nated wilderness or approximately 7 percent of the Nation's designated wilderness. (Table 3 identifies the Federal designated wilderness acreage by agency for New Mexico and the neighboring States of Arizona, Colorado, and Texas.)

Designated and administratively endorsed wilderness areas are distributed throughout New Mexico. The four wilderness management agencies in the State (BLM, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service) have administrative responsibility for approximately 22.6 million acres in New Mexico. (Table 4 identifies the total State acreage, total Federal acreage, and area managed by Federal agencies in New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and Texas.) In New Mexico, there are approximately 1.1 million acres of Federal land being considered for wilderness designation. The vast majority of this acreage (82 percent) is administered by the BLM and included in this report to Congress. The New Mexico BLM acreage represents 1 percent of the U.S. total Federal acres under wilderness review. (Table 5 identifies the Federal acreage being considered for wilderness in New Mexico and the adjoining States of Arizona, Colorado, and Texas.)

PROPOSED WILDERNESS NAMES

The names proposed for the New Mexico wilderness areas will, in general, be the same as the name identified for the study area. However, in 7 of the 23 recommended areas, a name change is proposed.

The contiguous Ignacio Chavez, Chamisa, La Lena, and Empedrado WSAs are recommended to be units of the proposed Boca del Oso Wilderness. The existing dirt roads which separate these WSAs would remain as the boundary between the recommended units of the proposed Boca del Oso Wilderness. The Boca del Oso, or Bear's Mouth, was selected as the proposed wilderness area name because it is a dominant topographic feature which lies at the heart of these four WSAs.

The Carrizozo Lava Flow and Little Black Peak WSAs are recommended to be units of the proposed Carrizozo Malpais Wilderness. The WSAs consist of the northern third of the Carrizozo "Malpais", a Spanish word meaning "badlands." The badlands are an extensive lava flow on the valley floor west of Carrizozo, New Mexico. The name of Carrizozo Malpais is proposed to both indicate geographic location and major landform of the wilderness.

The proposed Georgia O'Keeffe Wilderness encompasses the Rio Chama WSA. The Georgia O'Keeffe Wilderness was selected as the name for this area to honor the late artist and to recognize her love for New Mexico's natural heritage and her close association with northern New Mexico. This highly scenic river corridor is adjacent to the U.S. Forest Service Chama River Canyon Wilderness, and a separate name for the BLM unit would reduce confusion between the areas.

LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVE

In May 1987, the New Mexico Congressional Delegation initiated action on development of Statewide wilderness legislation for BLM land. A letter signed by each of the Congressmen was sent to the various user groups and individuals, as well as the BLM, U.S. Forest Service, Governor, State Land Commissioner, Indian Tribal leaders, and the military, requesting comments on the BLM wilderness allocation issue. In particular, the Congressmen asked for comments on the wilderness recommendations of both the BLM and the New Mexico Wilderness Coalition. The New Mexico Wilderness Coalition, representing all the local and national conservation groups, recommended designation of 1.8 million acres as wilderness. This wilderness recommendation included all of the BLM WSAs, lands released from further wilderness review by the BLM in 1980, U.S. Forest Service land, and State trust land administered by the New Mexico Commissioner of Public Lands.

Individuals and organizations sent several hundred comments to the New Mexico Congressional Dele-

Table 3: Federal Designated Wilderness Acreage, by State and by Agency

--- Designated Wilderness Acreage ---						--- Percent of Land Designated as Wilderness ---						
State	USFS	NPS	FWS	BLM	Total Designated	% of Total	USFS	NPS	FWS	BLM	Fed.Land	Total
Arizona	1,338,289	443,700	0	272,569	2,054,558	2.26%	11.87%	16.62%	0.00%	2.20%	6.56%	2.83%
Colorado	2,587,018	52,730	2,560	0	2,642,308	2.91%	17.91%	8.93%	4.35%	0.00%	10.99%	3.97%
New Mexico	1,388,063	56,392	39,908	128,900	1,613,263	1.77%	14.88%	16.28%	12.33%	1.00%	6.89%	2.07%
Texas	36,020	46,850	0	0	82,870	0.09%	4.78%	4.25%	0.00%	n/a	2.53%	0.05%

Table 4: Total State Acreage, Total Federal Acreage, and Area Managed by Federal Agencies

State	Total Area of State	Total Federal Acreage	Percent Federal	U.S.	National	U.S. Fish	Bureau of
				Forest Service	Park Service	& Wildlife Service	Land Management
Arizona	72,688,000	31,303,640	43.07%	11,278,317	2,669,823	1,574,179	12,370,514
Colorado	66,485,760	24,045,292	36.17%	14,445,192	590,268	58,865	8,277,152
New Mexico	77,766,400	23,341,695	30.02%	9,325,811	346,385	323,748	12,859,074
Texas	168,217,600	3,269,699	1.94%	753,139	1,102,434	284,626	0

APPENDIX I

WATERSHED INSTANT STUDY AREA

103
287

APPENDIX I

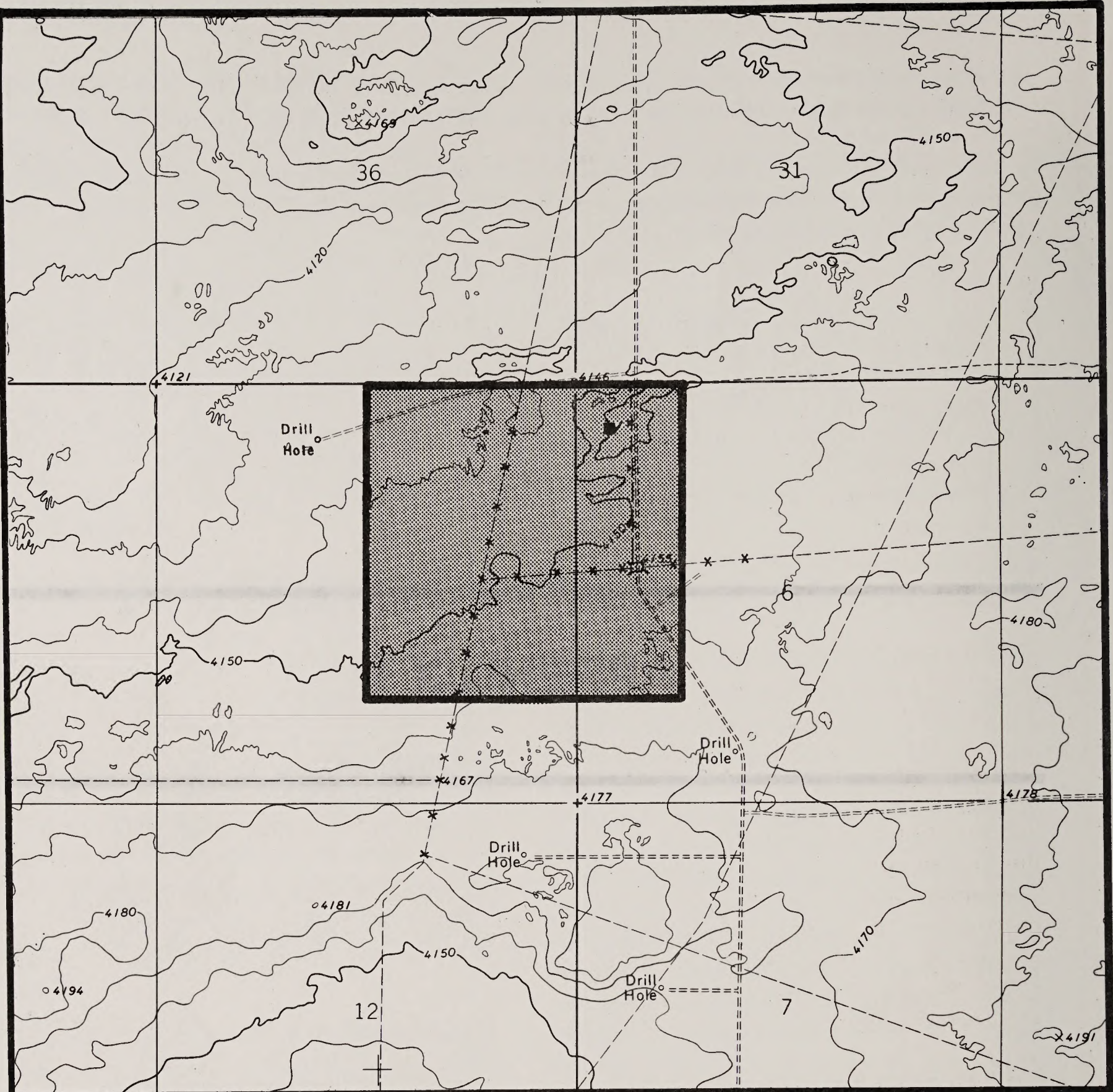
Watershed Proposal

W-12A-003

April 1980

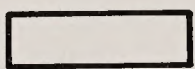
MAP I

T9S
T10S



R30E

R31E



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS (None)



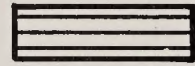
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILD. (None)



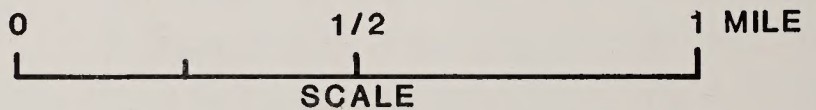
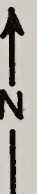
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)



PRIVATE (None)



Mathers Proposal

NM-ISA-003

April 1990

APPENDIX 1

MATHERS INSTANT STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA - 362 Acres

The Mathers Instant Study Area (ISA), NM-ISA-003, is located in eastern Chaves County, New Mexico, in a region generally referred to as the Querecho Plains. The ISA includes 362 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The closest major population center is Roswell, New Mexico, which is located 40 miles west of Mathers Natural Area.

The ISA is near the northern end of a 6-10 mile wide belt of stabilized and active sand dunes which parallels the western escarpment of the Llano Estacado (Staked Plains). These sands are primarily stabilized by shinnery oak, a low growing (1-3 foot) shrub member of the oak genus. The area presents a mixture of biological features due to its location in the overlap zone of the High Plains and the Chihuahuan Desert. Elevation ranges from approximately 4,135 feet to 4,160 feet. Temperature extremes vary from -35 degrees F. to 116 degrees F. and precipitation averages less than 16 inches per year. Annual evaporation averages 71-72 inches.

Feasibility determinations for establishing this area as a vegetative natural area were initiated during 1968. This portion of the W. E. Mathers Allotment was located in the extreme southwestern corner approximately 3 1/2 miles from the nearest water source. Due to this distance, the area had been subjected to very light grazing use and contained near-natural vegetation. It was initially proposed to construct a ten-acre cattle exclosure to preserve vegetation for comparative range studies. However, on August 27, 1970, Mathers Natural Area was designated.

The ISA was reviewed under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). The Mathers Wilderness Suitability Report was completed in September 1979.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0 Acres recommended wilderness
362 Acres recommended nonwilderness

The Mathers ISA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). This recommendation is based on the small size of the ISA, the presence of a major improved road which bisects the ISA, and the lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

The Mathers ISA was reviewed to determine the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics. The area was found to lack the primary characteristic of sufficient size so as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition. The ISA contains only 362 acres which is fragmented by a major improved road.

During this review the natural area was also determined to lack overall naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Approximately one-third of the ISA does exhibit ecological supplemental values specifically, near-pristine vegetation and nesting habitat for the lesser prairie chicken. No public support favoring wilderness designation of this area was received during the 45 day public review period.

The recommendation, while not environmentally preferred, will be implemented in a manner which would utilize all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts. In particular, the BLM has designated the area as a Research Natural Area. Protection of natural values and wildlife habitat will be accomplished through construction of an additional one-mile temporary exclosure fence. All of the fenced area will be designated and managed as closed to off-road vehicle use.

CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

The ISA is bisected by a major maintained road near the eastern boundary. In addition, an approximately 95 acre portion of the area is enclosed by a barbed wire fence. The west side of this

Table 1: Land Status and Acreage Summary

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>	<u>Acres</u>
BLM (Surface and Subsurface)	362
Split-Estate (BLM Surface Only)	0
Inholdings	<u>0</u>
Total	362
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>	
BLM (Within WSA)	0
BLM (Outside WSA)	0
Split-Estate (Within WSA)	<u>0</u>
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	0
Inholdings	0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>	
BLM (Surface and Subsurface)	362
Split-estate (BLM Surface Only)	<u>0</u>
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	362
Inholdings	0

enclosure fence bisects the designated area in a north-south orientation. A wildlife watering device in the north-east portion of the enclosed area is highly visible due to the size of the above ground structure. The vegetation within the fenced enclosure is in near pristine condition representative of the shinnery oak-sand prairie vegetation type.

Solitude

The ISA lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude. Maintained roads and fences divide the ISA into five units of land which vary in size from approximately 9 acres to 146 acres. With this fragmented pattern it would be difficult for a visitor to obtain a feeling of solitude. The lack of topographic and vegetative screening in this area also limits the opportunity for solitude.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The ISA lacks outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Recreational activities which could occur in this area include hiking, hunting, bird watching and sightseeing for botanical features. Horseback riding could occur in smaller areas, but this activity would be confined by the numerous fences. Unconfined recreational activities which could occur in the designated area are not of outstanding diversity or quality when compared with adjacent areas.

Special Features

The vegetation in this area is presently near climax condition. It has historically received very limited grazing use prior to designation as a natural area, and the 95-acre fenced enclosure contains the most pristine vegetation. A 73-acre tract directly west of the present enclosure is proposed for protection by construction of a new fence to provide stable nesting habitat for the lesser prairie chicken. The fenced area has been determined to be critical nesting habitat for the lesser prairie chicken. Scientific and educational values of the natural vegetation

and associated wildlife are deemed to be highly significant.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Wilderness Inventory Comments

On March 12, 1979, a 45-day public review period was initiated to receive comments on proposed BLM conclusions for the Mathers ISA. The area was recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation due to the absence of key characteristics of size, and opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

A series of three open-house meetings were held in Hobbs, Carlsbad and Roswell, New Mexico, on March 13, 14 and 15, 1979. On May 22, 23 and 24, 1979, workshops were held at each of the above locations. At each of these meetings, the proposed nonsuitable recommendation for the Mathers ISA was prominently displayed. In excess of 114 people attended the six meetings. Printed information and large scale maps were also mailed to numerous individuals, groups and agencies in order to attain the greatest possible public exposure.

Two contiguous roadless areas were inventoried by BLM during February 1978. Based on this initial inventory it was determined that wilderness characteristics were clearly and obviously lacking. This proposed decision was released for public review on March 12, 1979, concurrent with the public review period for the Mathers ISA. On July 9, 1979, this decision became final and the roadless areas were dropped from further wilderness consideration.

Over one thousand letters and oral comments were received by BLM offices in New Mexico as a result of the previously mentioned statewide public participation efforts. Comments were solicited on BLM recommendations for both initial wilderness inventory, and for previously designated natural areas or ISAs. During the public review period for the ISAs,

which ended on April 25, 1979, only one comment was received on the Mathers ISA. This comment agreed with the proposed nonsuitable recommendation. Two written comments concerning the natural area or contiguous roadless lands were received by BLM prior to the formal public comment period in 1979. One person stated that one of the contiguous roadless areas had wilderness potential and should be intensively inventoried for wilderness characteristics. Another person who had visited the ISA expressed doubt as to any wilderness potential.

The designated acreage is surrounded entirely by BLM and State lands. Contiguous Federal lands

were formally determined to not have wilderness values and were excluded from further consideration during the statewide initial inventory process. No public support for wilderness management of the area was received during the forty-five day public comment period. One written comment was received which favored continued management as a natural area. One letter was received prior to the public comment period which favored intensive inventory of contiguous lands, but no reference was made to the presence of wilderness characteristics in the ISA or the surrounding lands.

APPENDIX 2

MINERAL RESOURCE POTENTIAL SUMMARY

Area Name	Surface Area	Mineral Resource Potential
North Lake Park	25,117	There is a high potential for a variety of minerals in this area.
Alachua County	0	There is a high potential for a variety of minerals in this area.
South Florida Mountains	0	There is a high potential for a variety of minerals in this area.
<hr/>		
Adelphi	0	There is a high potential for a variety of minerals in this area.
Big Hatched Mountains	0	There is a high potential for a variety of minerals in this area.
<hr/>		
Base Creek	0	There is a high potential for a variety of minerals in this area.
Broken Mountain	0	There is a high potential for a variety of minerals in this area.
Caracas	0	There is a high potential for a variety of minerals in this area.
Caracas Lake Park	0	There is a high potential for a variety of minerals in this area.
Caracas Lake Park	0	There is a high potential for a variety of minerals in this area.
Caracas Mountains	0	There is a high potential for a variety of minerals in this area.

APPENDIX 2

MINERAL RESOURCE POTENTIAL SUMMARY

Area Name	Suitable Acres	Mineral Resource Potential
Aden Lava Flow	25,287	Entire WSA has a low mineral and energy resource occurrence potential.
Ah-shi-sle-pah	0	Identified coal reserves of 399.4 million tons. USGS/BM upgraded BLM's rating for oil and gas occurrence potential from low to high.
Alamo Hueco Mountains	0	USGS/BM upgraded BLM's rating for oil and gas occurrence potential from low to moderate.
Antelope	0	USGS/BM upgraded BLM's rating for coal from low to moderate.
Big Hatchet Mountains	45,374	USGS/BM identified two small, subeconomic resources of lead, silver, and zinc in the southern part of the WSA. USGS/BM lowered BLM's rating for oil and gas from moderate (11,700 acres) to low (entire area).
Blue Creek	0	USGS/BM upgraded BLM's rating for manganese from low to moderate.
Brokeoff Mountains	0	USGS/BM identified dolomite, suitable for use as agricultural lime and as refractory material, in the WSA. Entire WSA has a low mineral and energy resource occurrence potential.
Cabezon	8,159	USGS/BM lowered BLM's rating for oil and gas from moderate to low.
Carrizozo Lava Flow/ Little Black Peak	25,084	The WSA's have a low mineral and energy resource occurrence potential.
Cedar Mountains	0	USGS/BM considered the mineral and energy resource occurrence potential as unknown and recommended additional study.

Mineral Resource Potential Summary

Area Name	Suitable Acres	Mineral Resource Potential
Chamisa	15,758	Identified subeconomic measured resource of 2.2 million tons and an indicated resource of 4.7 million tons of coal at a depth of less than 500 feet. Entire WSA has a moderate occurrence potential for oil and gas.
Continental Divide	37,599	Entire WSA has a moderate occurrence potential for oil and gas. USGS/BM lowered rating for tin from moderate to low.
Cooke's Range	0	Moderate occurrence potential for manganese in southeastern part of WSA. Moderate occurrence potential for fluorite in most of WSA. High occurrence potential for lead, zinc, silver, and copper in northern part of WSA and moderate occurrence potential in central part of WSA.
Cowboy Spring	6,699	Entire WSA has a low mineral and energy resource occurrence potential.
Culp Canyon	0	USGS/BM lowered BLM's rating for oil and gas from moderate to low.
Devil's Backbone	0	Entire WSA has a moderate occurrence potential for lead, zinc, copper, molybdenum, and gold. USGS/BM upgraded BLM's rating for manganese from low to moderate.
Devil's Den Canyon	0	Entire WSA has a moderate occurrence potential for copper, lead, and zinc.
Eagle Peak	0	USGS/BM upgraded BLM's rating for uranium from moderate (8,000 acres) to moderate (entire WSA). WSA is included in Salt Lake Coal Field. The Salt Lake Coal Field is estimated to contain 327 million tons of coal.

Area Name	Suitable Acres	Mineral Resource Potential
Empedrado	9,007	Identified measured resource of 3.9 million tons and an indicated resource of 9.8 million tons of coal at a depth of less than 500 feet. The coal is marginally economic only in conjunction with coal on adjacent lands outside the WSA. Entire WSA has a moderate occurrence potential for oil and gas.
Florida Mountains	0	High occurrence potential for gold, barite, silver, copper, lead, zinc and fluorite in east-central part of WSA and in 2 locations in northeast part of WSA. Remainder of WSA has a moderate occurrence potential for gold, barite, silver, copper, lead, zinc, and fluorite. USGS/BM upgraded BLM's rating for manganese from moderate (1,300 acres) to high (1,300 acres).
Gila Lower Box	5,835	USGS/BM upgraded BLM's rating for manganese from low to high in eastern part of WSA and from low to moderate in remainder of WSA.
Horse Mountain	4,432	Entire WSA has a moderate occurrence potential for oil and gas. USGS/BM lowered BLM's rating for copper, gold, iron, manganese, molybdenum, silver, tin, uranium, and zinc from moderate to low.
Ignacio Chavez	33,609	Measured resource of 19.2 million tons and an indicated resource of 63 million tons of coal at a depth of less than 500 feet. USGS/BM state that excessive amounts of overburden and the thin, lenticular character of coal beds make development of the coal unlikely. Entire WSA has a moderate occurrence potential for oil and gas.
Jornada del Muerto	31,147	USGS/BM lowered BLM's rating for oil and gas from moderate to low.

Area Name	Suitable Acres	Mineral Resource Potential
La Lena	10,438	Measured resource of 17 million tons and an indicated resource of 23.4 million tons of coal at a depth of less than 500 feet. USGS/BM state the coal could be marginally economic when combined with coal on adjacent lands. USGS/BM lowered BLM's rating for oil and gas from high (6,037 acres) to moderate (entire area).
Las Uvas Mountains	0	The entire WSA has a low mineral and energy resource occurrence potential.
Lonesome Ridge	0	Identified limestone resource. Moderate occurrence potential for oil and gas. Moderate occurrence potential for copper, lead, and zinc.
Manzano	881	USGS/BM lowered BLM's rating for oil and gas from moderate to low.
McKittrick Canyon	0	Moderate occurrence potential for oil and gas, copper, lead, and zinc.
Mesita Blanca	0	WSA is included in Salt Lake Coal Field. The Salt Lake Coal Field is estimated to contain 327 million tons of coal.
Mudgetts	0	Entire WSA has a high occurrence potential for oil and gas and a moderate occurrence potential for copper, lead, and zinc.
Ojito	10,903	Inferred subeconomic resource of 6 million tons of gypsum. Moderate occurrence potential for uranium. However, USGS/BM believes the grade of the uranium is far below that of economic deposits. USGS/BM lowered BLM's rating for oil and gas from moderate to low.
Organ Mountains	7,283	High occurrence potential for copper, molybdenum, gold, and silver in northern part of WSA. Moderate occurrence potential for copper, silver, lead, zinc, and fluorite along western edge of WSA.
Petaca Pinta	10,631	USGS/BM lowered BLM's rating for oil and gas from moderate to low.

Area Name	Suitable Acres	Mineral Resource Potential
Presilla	0	Moderate occurrence potential for geothermal resources. USGS/BM upgraded BLM's rating for fluorite, barite, and copper from moderate to high in the north-central part of WSA. USGS/BM lowered BLM's rating for uranium from moderate to low.
Rio Chama	5,918	The entire WSA has low occurrence potential for mineral and energy resources.
Robledo Mountains	0	Identified deposits of limestone in the southeastern part of WSA.
Sabinoso	0	The entire WSA has a moderate occurrence potential for uranium.
San Antonio	0	The entire WSA has low occurrence potential for mineral and energy resources.
Sierra de las Canas	12,798	Approximately 50,000 short tons of gypsum occur in the southeast corner of the WSA. USGS/BM lowered BLM's ratings for geothermal, copper, barite, fluorspar, lead, and zinc from moderate to low.
Sierra Ladrones	31,804	Moderate occurrence potential for gold and silver in northeastern part of WSA. Moderate occurrence potential for tungsten, bismuth, molybdenum, lead, and tin in the northern part of WSA. Moderate occurrence potential for fluorite in eastern part of WSA. USGS/BM reduced the size of the area with moderate occurrence potential for manganese, cobalt, and nickel from 8,100 acres to two mine locations in southern part of WSA.
Stallion	0	USGS/BM rated the occurrence potential for rare-earth elements as high in the northeast part of the WSA. USGS/BM upgraded BLM's rating for gypsum from low to moderate.
Veranito	0	Moderate occurrence potential for geothermal resources.

Area Name	Suitable Acres	Mineral Resource Potential
W. Potrillo/Mt. Riley	148,540	Volcanic cinders are being mined from the Chaparral block of 6 placer claims along the southern boundary of the WSA. Cinder production from these claims is projected for the next 20 years. USGS/BM rated the remainder of the WSA as having no mineral or energy resource occurrence potential.

Source: *Mineral Summaries Bureau of Land Management Wilderness Study Areas in New Mexico*; U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Bureau of Mines. June 1989.

APPENDIX 3

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA MAPS AND SUMMARY DESCRIPTIONS AND RATIONALE

WSA Name	Page	WSA Name	Page
Alamo Canyon	1	Pinole	87
Rio Chama	4	Sierra de las Uñas	96
San Juan	7	Sierra Lagunas	97
San Antonio	10	Sierra	97
Cochran	12	Vineyard	97
Chalupa	15	APPENDIX 3	
Enchanted	18	Alamo Canyon	98
Indian Canyon	21	Agua de San Juan	99
La Jolla	24	Big Horned Mountains	99
Marzano (SSE)	27	Blue Creek	99
Ojo	30	Cedar Mountains	99
Pedra Blanca	32	Cerro Prieta	99
Redondo	35	Cerro Prieta	99
Cañon del Diabolo	36	Cerro Prieta	99
Quartz Backs	37	Cerro Prieta	99
Eagle Park	39	Cerro Prieta	99
La Jolla	40	Cerro Prieta	99
Jornada del Muerto	41	Cerro Prieta	99
Mojo Blanca	42	Cerro Prieta	99

APPENDIX 3 **WILDERNESS STUDY ARE A MAPS** **AND SUMMARY DESCRIPTIONS AND RATIONALE**

WSA Name	Page	WSA Name	Page
Ah-shi-sie-pah	1	Presilla	57
Rio Chama	4	Sierra de las Canas	60
Sabinoso	7	Sierra Ladrones	63
San Antonio	10	Stallion	67
Cabazon	12	Veranito	70
Chamisa	15	Aden Lava Flow	72
Empedrado	18	Alamo Hueco Mountains	75
Ignacio Chavez	21	Apache Box (202)	78
La Lena	24	Big Hatchet Mountains	81
Manzano (202)	27	Blue Creek	84
Ojito	29	Cedar Mountains	87
Petaca Pinta	32	Cooke's Range	89
Antelope	35	Cowboy Spring	92
Continental Divide	38	Florida Mountains	95
Devil's Backbone	42	Gila Lower Box	98
Eagle Peak	45	Guadalupe Canyon	101
Horse Mountain	48	Las Uvas Mountains	103
Jornada del Muerto	51	Organ Mountains	105
Mesita Blanca	54	Peloncillo Mountains	108

WSA Name	Page	WSA Name	Page
Robledo Mountains	111	Lonesome Ridge, Devil's Den Cayon, McKittrick Canyon	125
West Portillo/Mount Riley	113		
Brokeoff Mountains	116	Mudgetts	128
Culp Canyon	119		
Carrizozo Lava Flow/ Little Black Peak	122		

AH-SHI-SLE-PAH WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA - 6,563 Acres

The Ah-shi-sle-pah Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-010-009, is located approximately 50 miles south of Farmington, New Mexico, and 2 miles north of the Chaco Culture National Historical Park. The WSA contains 6,563 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. The WSA is bordered on the south and east by a maintained road and transmission line and on the north and west by State and Navajo property boundaries.

Landforms in this region include mesas, retreating escarpments, arroyos, badland hills, and rolling plains. The major drainage found in the WSA is Ah-shi-sle-pah Wash. Most of the WSA consists of badlands (4,542 acres) and is devoid of vegetation. The Kirtland Shale and Fruitland Formations in these badland areas contain excellent preserved fossils such as petrified logs, dinosaurs, turtles, and crocodile teeth.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0	Acres recommended wilderness
6,563	Acres recommended nonwilderness

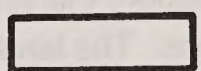
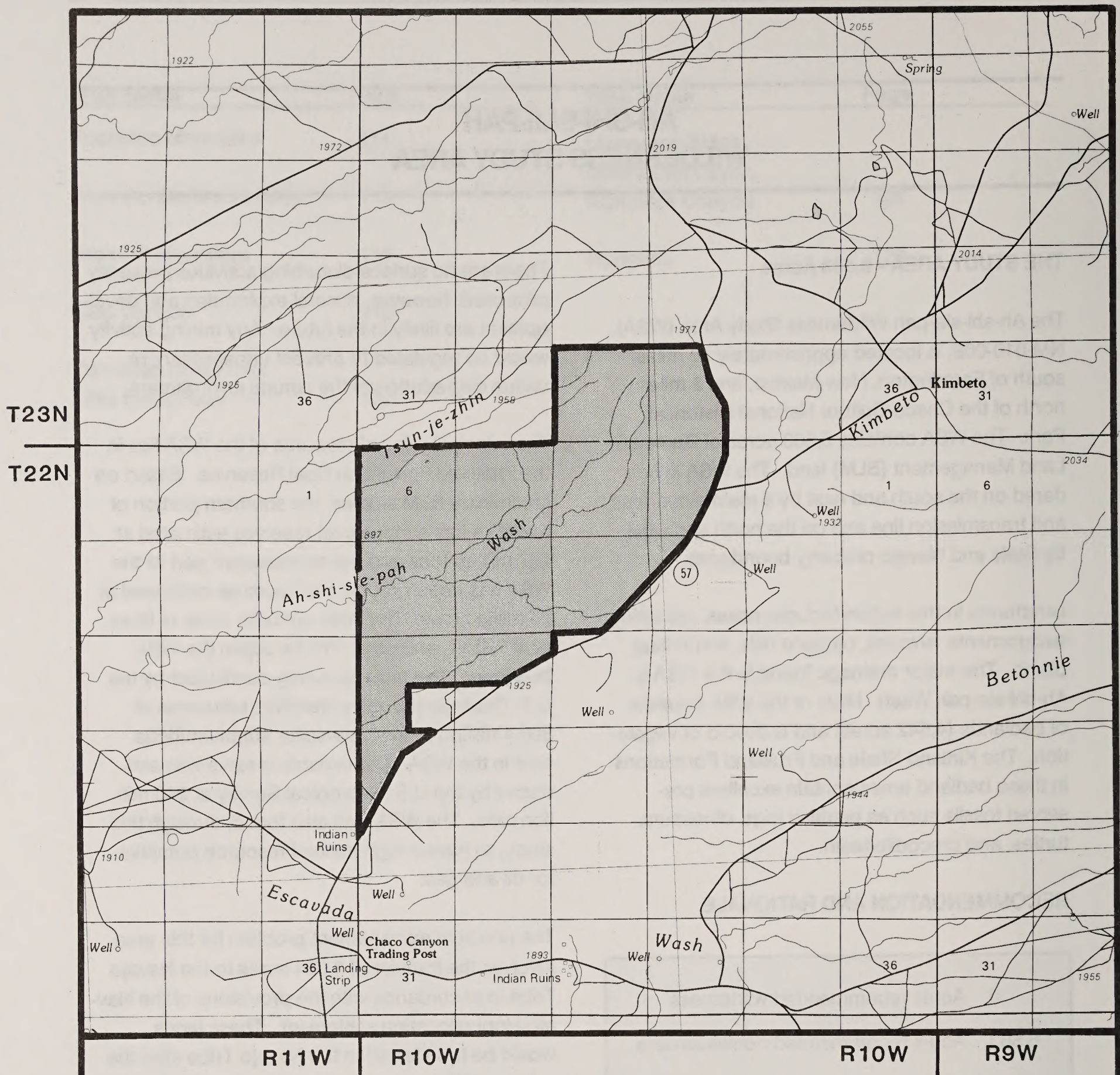
The Ah-shi-sle-pah WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). The recommendation is based on the known coal reserves, the existence of Preference Right Lease Applications (PRLAs) on 90 percent of the WSA's acreage, the anticipated likelihood of future mineral development, and the potential transfer of 3,094 acres in the WSA to the Navajo Tribe. These factors combine to make the Ah-shi-sle-pah WSA unmanageable as wilderness.

There are no surface disturbing activities presently proposed, however, mineral exploration and development are likely in the future. Any mining activity would be regulated to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the natural environment.

The principal mineral resource of the WSA lies in the Fruitland Formation Coal Reserves. Based on preliminary BLM studies, the southern portion of the WSA has surface coal reserves estimated at 187 million tons and the northeastern part of the WSA has underground coal reserves estimated at 76 million tons. The WSA contains parts of three coal PRLAs, and other PRLAs adjoin the WSA boundary. The mineral survey conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey identified resources of 399.4 million tons of low-sulfur subbituminous coal in the WSA. The minable reserve was estimated by the U.S. Geological Survey at 240 million tons. The WSA was also found, through this study, to have a high mineral resource potential for oil and gas.

The principal management problem for this area involves the transfer of 3,094 acres to the Navajo Tribe in accordance with the provisions of the Navajo-Hopi relocation settlement. These lands would be transferred to the Navajo Tribe after the existing PRLAs are adjudicated. Should this selection be completed prior to Congressional action on the wilderness recommendation, this area could not be managed as wilderness. The land would be held in trust by the Secretary of the Interior for the Navajo Tribe and no longer under BLM jurisdiction. This would leave 3,469 acres under BLM administration. The remaining acreage would contain the same wilderness characteristics of naturalness, solitude, opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features as the 6,563-acre WSA, just on a smaller scale.

MAP I



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS (None)



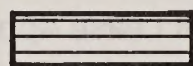
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



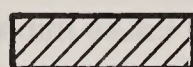
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILD. (None)



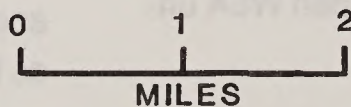
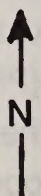
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)



PRIVATE (None)



Ah-shi-sle-pah Proposal

NM-010-009

April 1990

However, the small size and irregular boundary configuration would result in greater outside impacts on the wilderness area.

There is no question the Ah-shi-sle-pah WSA has outstanding wilderness values. This recommendation is not based on the quality of those wilder-

ness values, but on the ability of BLM to effectively manage the area as wilderness. Given the information about the known coal reserves, the presence of the PRLAs, and the Navajo selection of 3,094 acres in the WSA, BLM does not feel it could reasonably manage the area as wilderness.

The recommendation is based on the exceptional cultural quality of the Rio Chama Canyon and the associated historic and prehistoric resources, such as petroglyphs, pictographs, and masonry. This area can also be effectively managed as wilderness. The surrounding areas outside the canyon are not being recommended for wilderness because of their high agricultural value. This portion of the WSA, primarily north and east of the canyon, contains a variety of resources, including old-growth forest, riparian habitat, and old-growth timber. The recommendation for wilderness is based on the exceptional cultural quality of the Rio Chama Canyon and the associated historic and prehistoric resources, such as petroglyphs, pictographs, and masonry. This area can also be effectively managed as wilderness. The surrounding areas outside the canyon are not being recommended for wilderness because of their high agricultural value. This portion of the WSA, primarily north and east of the canyon, contains a variety of resources, including old-growth forest, riparian habitat, and old-growth timber.

The majority of the WSA is located within the Navajo Nation, and the Navajo Nation has a strong interest in the area. The Navajo Nation has a strong interest in the area, and the Navajo Nation has a strong interest in the area.

The Rio Chama's most spectacular scenery and best opportunities for canyoneering and wild horse riding are located in the area. The area is characterized by the Rio Chama, a river that flows through the canyon, winding out from the canyon rim. The steep, rugged canyon and vegetation are a beautiful example of a natural resource. The area is also known for its petroglyphs and pictographs, which are located in the canyon walls. The Rio Chama is the only river in New Mexico that flows through a wilderness area.

The recommended wilderness includes 600 acres of BLM land and 1,000 acres of Navajo land.

The Rio Chama WSA, located in the Rio Chama Canyon, is approximately 3.3 miles wide and 2.5 miles long. The WSA is located in the Rio Chama Canyon, which is a part of the Rio Chama River. The WSA is located in the Rio Chama Canyon, which is a part of the Rio Chama River. The WSA is located in the Rio Chama Canyon, which is a part of the Rio Chama River.

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RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The recommendation for the Rio Chama WSA is to designate 1,600 acres as wilderness, including 600 acres of BLM land and 1,000 acres of Navajo land. The recommendation is based on the exceptional cultural quality of the Rio Chama Canyon and the associated historic and prehistoric resources, such as petroglyphs, pictographs, and masonry. This area can also be effectively managed as wilderness. The surrounding areas outside the canyon are not being recommended for wilderness because of their high agricultural value. This portion of the WSA, primarily north and east of the canyon, contains a variety of resources, including old-growth forest, riparian habitat, and old-growth timber.

RIO CHAMA WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA - 11,985 Acres

The Rio Chama WSA, NM-010-059, is located in Rio Arriba County, approximately 3.5 miles south of El Vado, New Mexico, (see Map 1). The WSA lies adjacent to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Chama River Canyon Wilderness and contains 11,985 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. There are 461 acres of private inholdings contained in three parcels. The WSA is bounded on the south and west by USFS land and on the north and east by a combination of dirt roads and non-Federal lands.

The Rio Chama WSA is composed of a combination of gently rolling grass and sage plains bordered by dense ponderosa stands and the northern portions of Gallina Peak. The WSA is bisected on a north-south line by the Rio Chama, which meanders through a 900-foot deep canyon. In 1988, the Rio Chama was designated as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The WSA ranges in elevation from 6,600 feet to 7,500 feet.

5,918	Acres recommended wilderness
6,753	Acres recommended nonwilderness

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The recommendation for the Rio Chama WSA is to designate 5,918 acres as wilderness, including 686 acres of BLM land contiguous to the WSA, and release the remaining 6,753 acres for uses other than wilderness (see Map 1). This recom-

mendation is based on the exceptional natural qualities of the Rio Chama Canyon and the associated primitive recreation opportunities, such as floatboating, hiking, fishing, and camping. This area can also be effectively managed as wilderness. The remaining acreage outside the canyon are not being recommended for wilderness because of their marginal wilderness values. This portion of the WSA marginally meets the required naturalness criterion with its numerous vehicle ways and impacts from old timber sales and vegetation manipulations. The opportunities for solitude in this portion of the WSA are not exceptional. The recommendation for wilderness will further apply to any additional inholding acreage acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners.

The majority of this WSA is recommended as wilderness, and there are no surface disturbing activities proposed for the area not recommended for wilderness designation.

The Rio Chama's most spectacular scenery and best opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude exist in the area recommended for wilderness. The area is characterized by the Rio Chama, its main canyon, and those woodlands extending out from the canyon rim. The deep rugged canyon and vegetation offer a tremendous experience of solitude for visitors who are down by the river or hiking the inner canyons below the rim. The Rio Chama is the only river in New Mexico where rafters, kayackers, and canoeists can float through a wilderness.

The recommended wilderness includes 686 acres of BLM land located outside the boundaries of the

MAP I

T27N

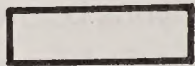
T26N

R1E

R2E

R2E

R3E



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



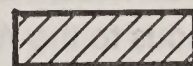
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILD.



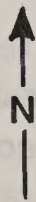
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)



PRIVATE

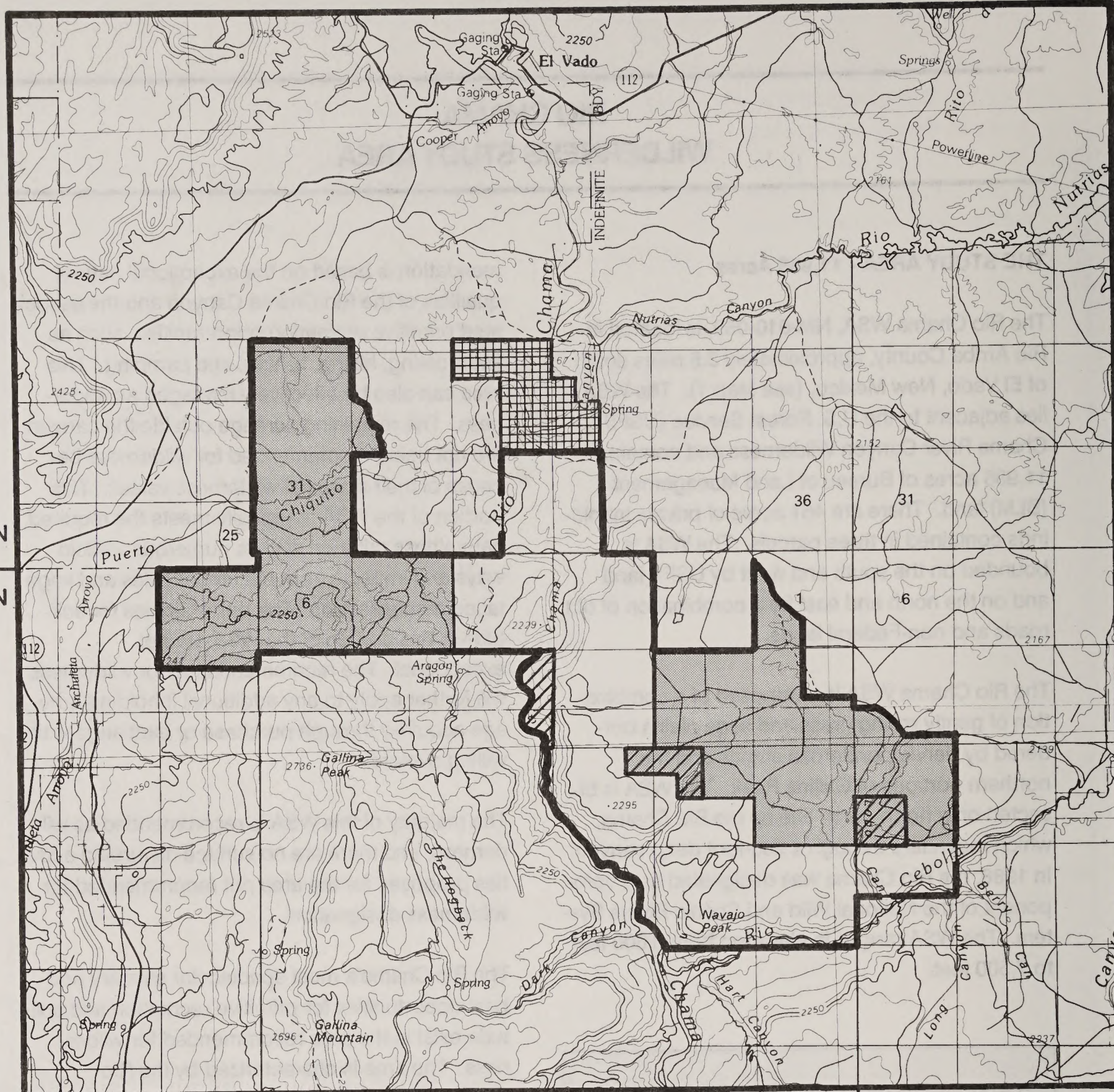


MILES

Rio Chama Proposal

NM-010-059

April 1990



WSA. In April 1990, BLM acquired 320 acres of private land in the canyon along the northern boundary of the WSA. The acquired lands, as well as the adjoining 366 acres of BLM land, add valuable river corridor property to the proposed wilderness. These lands are primitive in character, with a historic homestead located on about 5 acres adjacent to the river. The historic homestead is the first stopping point for Rio Chama floatboaters. Wilderness management will be enhanced by including these lands in the recommended wilderness.

The area can be managed to preserve the quality of the wilderness characteristics. The topography and vegetation of the area and the absence of conflicting land uses or private rights would allow BLM to manage the area to ensure its preservation and use as wilderness in an unimpaired condition. The contiguous USFS Chama River Canyon Wilderness along the southern boundary and the recent designation of the Rio Chama as a component of the National Wild and Scenic River System enhances the BLM's ability to manage the area as wilderness.

Conflicts with other resource uses in the area recommended for wilderness designation are limited. Grazing use will be allowed to continue. Facility maintenance needs in the WSA are minimal.

There are no proposed livestock developments which would be foregone.

The mineral survey conducted by U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and U.S. Bureau of Mines revealed the Rio Chama WSA has low mineral resource potential for oil and gas, geothermal energy, uranium, and all metallic resources. The WSA also has inferred sub-economic sand, gravel, limestone, and sandstone resources.

In the area not recommended for wilderness designation, the BLM rated the wilderness qualities as marginal during the inventory. This area includes those portions of the WSA beyond the canyon rim and around the periphery of the WSA. These lands contain rangeland improvements, access routes, reseeded areas, and private inholdings with structures. The concentration of rangeland improvements, areas reseeded with non-native grasses, and 16 miles of vehicle trails reduces the naturalness in this area. Management of this area as wilderness would be more difficult than for the canyon area, requiring signing and patrol to enforce vehicle use limitations, and acquisition and reclamation of private inholdings to achieve wilderness management objectives.

SABINOSO WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 15,760 Acres

The Sabinoso WSA, NM-010-055, is located in San Miguel County, approximately 8 miles northeast of Trujillo, New Mexico, 20 miles northwest of Conchas Reservoir, and 1 mile due west of Sabinoso, New Mexico, (see Map 1). The WSA contains approximately 15,760 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and 320 acres of private inholdings. The WSA is bordered primarily by private and State lands.

The WSA is a series of high, narrow mesas surrounded by steep, rock-walled canyons. Elevations in the WSA range from 4,500 feet to 6,000 feet. The WSA's western boundary runs along the bottom of Canyon Largo, which enters the Canadian River at the town of Sabinoso. The Canyon Largo is an ephemeral stream. The rugged country primarily supports pinyon pine and juniper woodlands, with a perennial warm season grass savanna along the smoother mesa tops. The pinyon pine and juniper woodlands also include ponderosa pine. Along the canyon bottoms where the water table is high and streams periodically flow, riparian species are found, including cottonwood and willow.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0 Acres recommended wilderness

15,760 Acres recommended nonwilderness

The Sabinoso WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). This recommen-

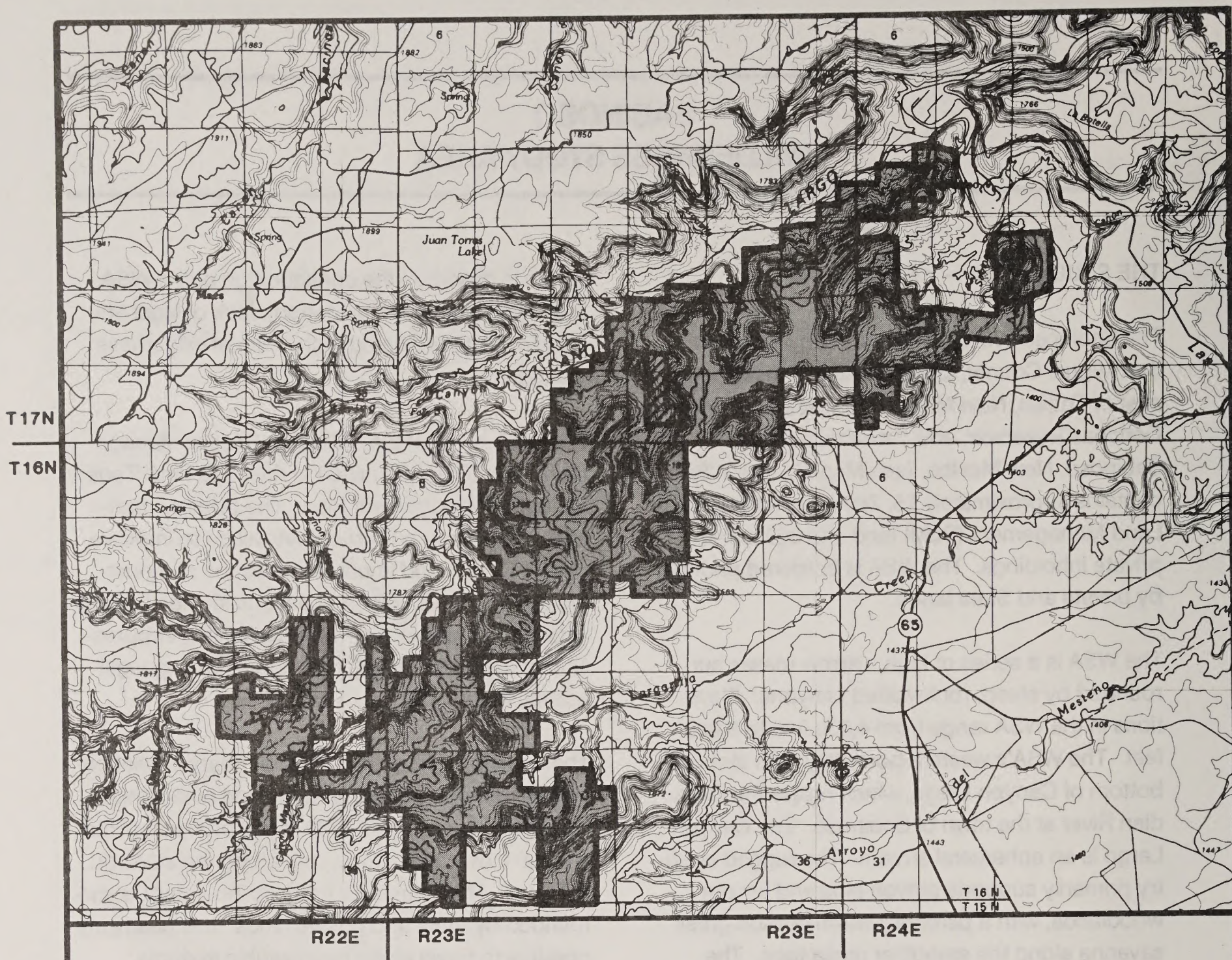
dation is based on the configuration of the WSA, the adjacent land status pattern, lack of legal access, and the projected high costs of wilderness management.

The WSA is within the Sabinoso Special Management Area (SMA) identified in the 1988 Final Taos Resource Management Plan. The primary management objective for the SMA will be to improve wildlife habitat and improve recreation and hunting opportunities. Planned actions include limiting vegetation manipulation actions, limiting suppression of naturally ignited fires, and acquiring legal access to the area.

The configuration of the WSA boundary in relationship to the topographic features and land status, leaves narrow necks of WSA lands protruding into canyons, over mesa tops, and along the sides of canyons. This extremely irregular boundary is surrounded by State and private lands. It is nearly impossible to travel along topographic features, such as canyon bottoms and ridge or mesa tops, without crossing private or State lands. Some of the narrow necks of BLM land are almost considered inaccessible to hikers as a result of the sheer cliffs and rugged topography that would have to be traversed to avoid trespass. BLM would have to acquire substantial amounts of State and private land sections adjacent to the WSA to help create a manageable boundary.

There is no question the Sabinoso WSA has outstanding wilderness values. This recommendation is not based on the quality of those wilderness values, but on the ability of BLM to ef-

MAP 1



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None)

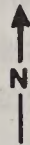
RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None)

SPLIT ESTATE (None)

STATE (None)

PRIVATE



Sabinoso Proposal
NM-010-055

0 1 2
MILES

April 1990

fectively manage the area. Given the present land status in the Sabinoso region, BLM does not feel it could reasonably manage the area as wilderness. Wilderness designation would have to be contingent upon acquiring substantial amounts of private land in the area. In addition, with the lack of projected activities, low mineral potential, and

valid existing rights, it is expected that even without wilderness designation, the quality and level of values now found in the WSA would not significantly change.

The San Antonio Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NMN-10-035, is located in Rio Arriba County, New Mexico, in the northern end of San Antonio Mountain, approximately 8 miles southeast of Arroyo Colorado, and 12 miles north of Tuba City, New Mexico. The WSA contains 7,320 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and 200 acres of State land. The WSA is bounded on the north and south by a mixture of private and U.S. Forest Service land. A right-of-way for a pipeline runs along the eastern boundary of the WSA.

The WSA is composed of broad, rolling sagebrush and grass plains sloping north to south to the Rio Grande. Rio San Antonio Canyon (also known as San Antonio Gorge). The WSA is at an elevation from 7,000 feet to 8,000 feet. Vegetation varies from mesquite and oak in the lower portions to dry grass and juniper and sagebrush in the higher portions. The desert is very dry and open, with sparse vegetation. The desert is very dry and open, with sparse vegetation. The desert is very dry and open, with sparse vegetation.

1. The WSA is recommended for wilderness designation.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The San Antonio WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). While the area

contains the same resources as the WSA, it is not recommended for wilderness designation.

The WSA is recommended for wilderness designation as part of the San Antonio Gorge management plan, and is recommended for wilderness designation as part of the San Antonio Gorge management plan, and is recommended for wilderness designation as part of the San Antonio Gorge management plan.

Opportunities for recreation and unimpaired resource values in the WSA are determined by BLM to be low. The area is primarily open and is not recommended for wilderness designation.

The last, most serious threat to the WSA is the lack of mineral and oil access by off-road vehicles from adjacent U.S. Forest Service land, which is very high. Mining and drilling activities would be an expensive and long-term commitment of resources to properly manage the WSA as a designated wilderness.

SAN ANTONIO WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 7,050 Acres

The San Antonio Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-010-035, is located in Rio Arriba County, New Mexico. It lies northwest of San Antonio Mountain, approximately 6 miles southwest of Antonito, Colorado, and 12 miles north of Tres Piedras, New Mexico. The WSA contains 7,050 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and 1,280 acres of State inholdings. The WSA is bound on the north, west, and south by a combination of private and U.S. Forest Service boundaries. A right-of-way for a telephone line forms the eastern boundary of the WSA.

The WSA is composed of broad, gently rolling sage-brush and grass plains bisected north to south by the 200-foot-deep Rio San Antonio Canyon (also known as San Antonio Gorge). The WSA ranges in elevation from 7,900 feet to 8,835 feet. Vegetation varies from riparian habitat in the river canyons to dry sagebrush and pinyon pine and juniper woodlands in the flat open plain. The overall feeling is one of open expanses, contrasted by the deep incisions in the flat plains produced by the river canyon that abruptly drops out of sight.

0	Acres recommended wilderness
7,050	Acres recommended nonwilderness

contains the values necessary for study, they are not considered to be of a quality to merit inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS).

The 1988 Taos Resource Management Plan identified the entire WSA as part of the San Antonio Special Management Area, and designated the San Antonio Gorge as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Management would emphasize wildlife habitat and scenic values as the highest priority over other resource uses when considering proposed actions within the WSA. Management prescriptions include acquisition of the two State parcels within the WSA, implementation of wildlife habitat improvement projects, and limitations on vehicle use.

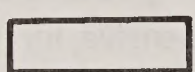
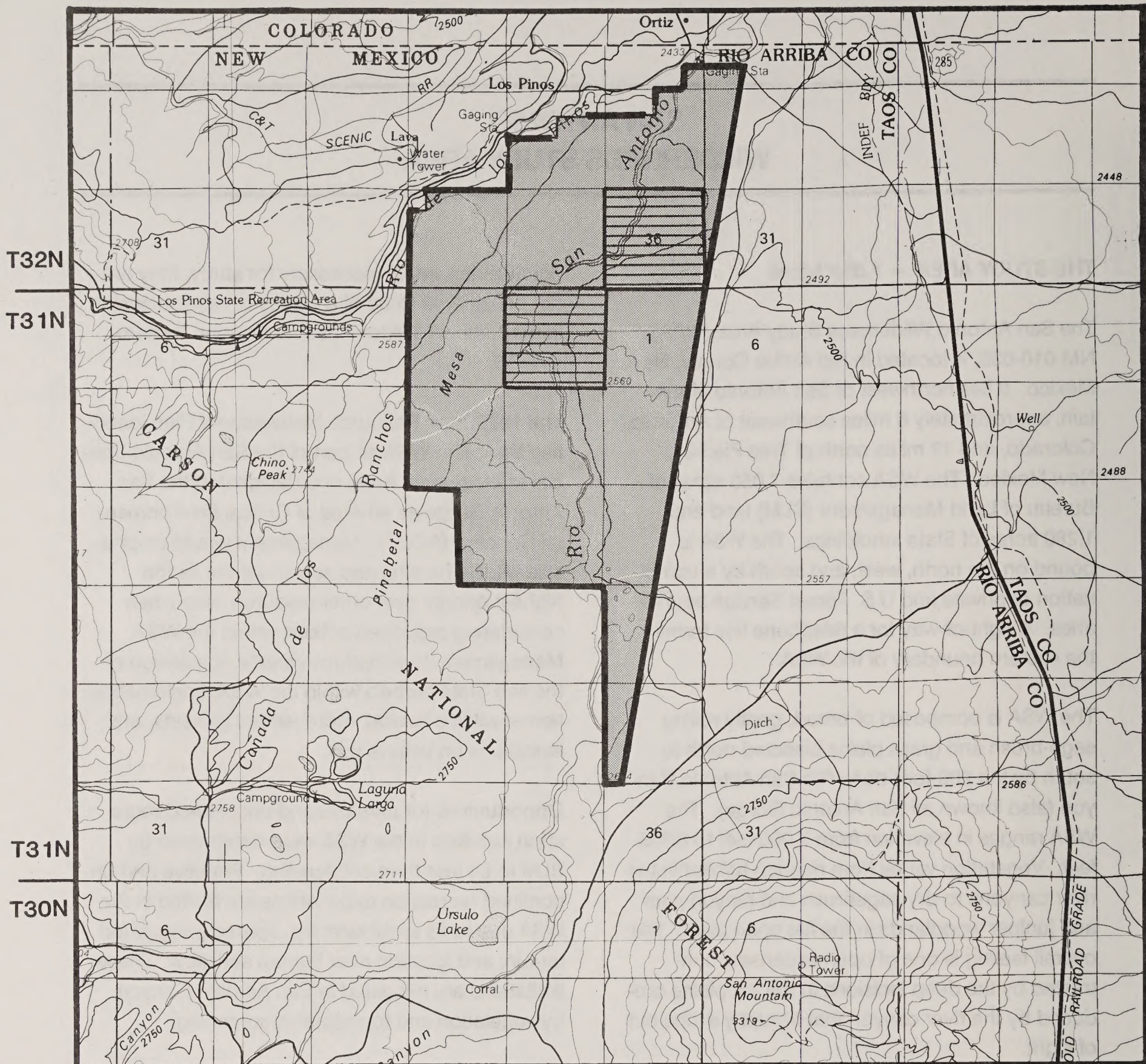
Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation activities in the WSA were determined by BLM to be less than outstanding. Primitive and unconfined recreation experiences are limited in the WSA due to its small size; flat, sparsely vegetated terrain; and location near human activities. These limitations are mitigated in San Antonio Canyon by vegetation and topographic screening.

The flat, open terrain of much of the WSA allows for almost unlimited access by off-road vehicles from adjacent U.S. Forest Service land, where hunter pressure is very high. Limiting access by signing and patrol would be an expensive, long-term commitment of manpower to properly manage the area if it were designated wilderness.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The San Antonio WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). While the area

MAP I



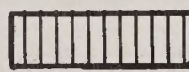
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS (None)



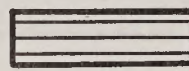
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILD. (None)



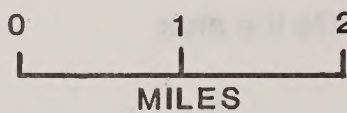
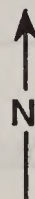
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE



PRIVATE (None)



San Antonio Proposal

NM-010-035

April 1990

CABEZON WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 8,159 Acres

The Cabezon Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-010-022, is located approximately 15 miles due west of San Ysidro, New Mexico. The WSA contains 8,159 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and approximately 26 acres of private inholdings. The major portion of the WSA consists of land, formerly part of the Ojo del Espiritu Santo Land Grant, acquired by the Federal government under the Bankhead-Jones Act of 1937. The WSA is bordered on the north and south by maintained roads, on the west by property boundaries and a maintained road, and on the east by a combination of a powerline right-of-way and a maintained road (see Map 1).

The Cabezon WSA lies within the Navajo Section of the Colorado Plateau Province. The climate is semiarid and the landforms strikingly reflect the erosive processes. Three principal landforms occur within the Cabezon WSA: the eroded volcanic neck of Cabezon Peak; the talus-covered slopes at the base of the neck; and the incised mesa topography characterizing the remainder of the WSA. The Navajo Section consists of sandstone beds with lesser amounts of shale that have been subjected to great erosion. In addition to these landforms, the Navajo Section is characterized by numerous occurrences of volcanic necks, buttes, and mesas. Cabezon Peak, rising to an elevation of 7,785 feet, is one of the most spectacular examples of these volcanic necks.

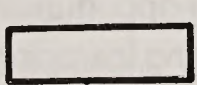
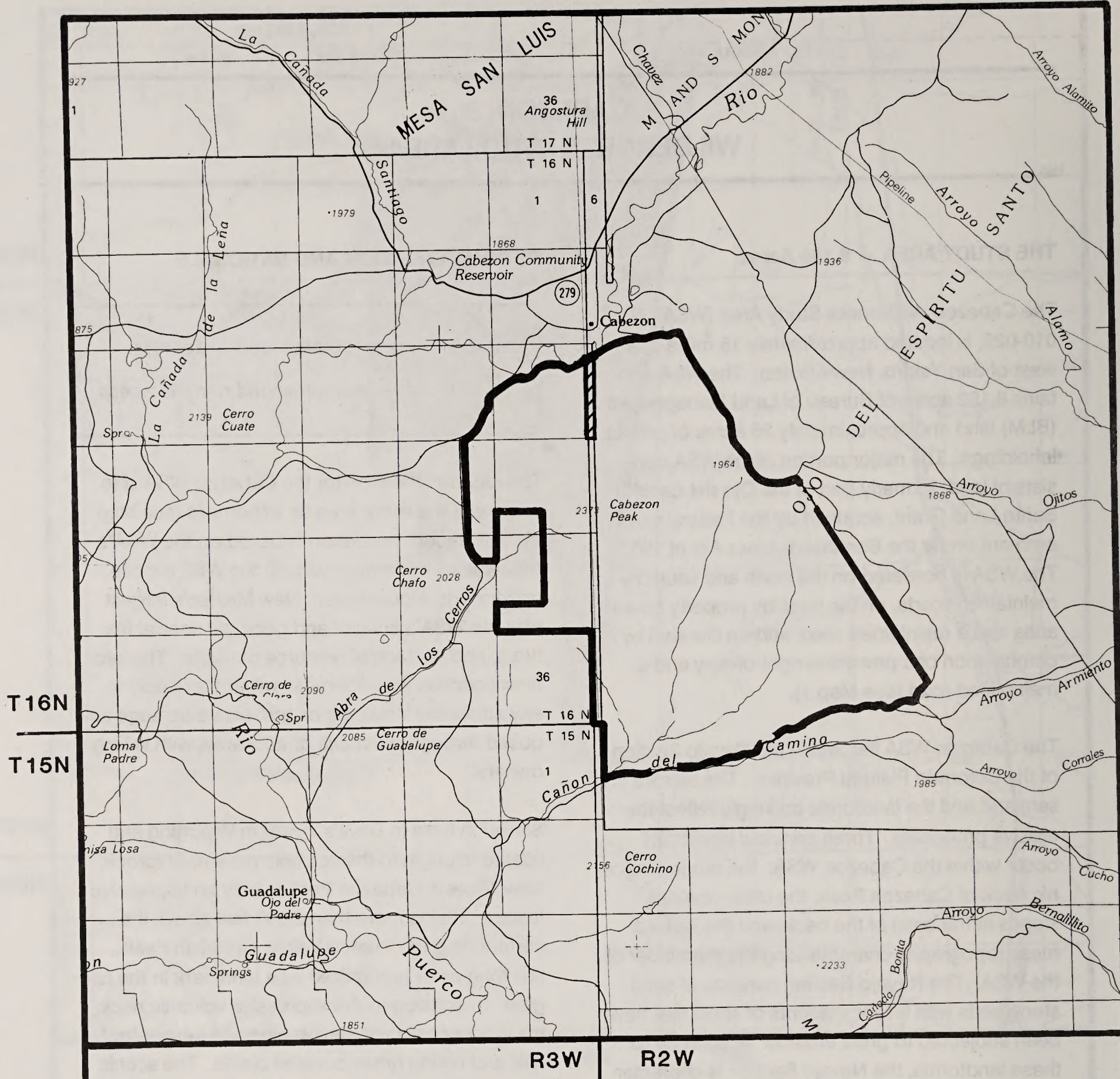
RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

8,159	Acres recommended wilderness
0	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Cabezon WSA is to designate the entire area as wilderness (see Map 1). This recommendation is based on the WSA's high-quality wilderness values; the WSA's close proximity to Albuquerque, New Mexico's largest city; the WSA's cultural and geologic special features; and the lack of resource conflicts. This recommendation for wilderness will further apply to any additional inholding or split-estate acreage acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners.

Similar in form to Devil's Tower in Wyoming and related in origin to the volcanic neck at Shiprock, New Mexico, Cabezon Peak is truly an impressive feature. Rising more than 2,000 feet above the surrounding Rio Puerco Valley, Cabezon Peak has long been recognized as a landmark in the region. In addition to the impressive volcanic neck, the WSA consists of pinyon pine and juniper foothills and rolling grass covered plains. The scenic values of this area and the close proximity to the population center of Albuquerque contribute to the area's outstanding recreation opportunities. Popular activities include day hiking, camping, and climbing the rocky volcanic neck. The rug-

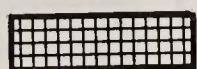
MAP I



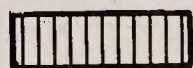
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



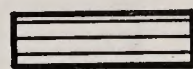
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS (None)



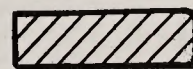
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILD. (None)



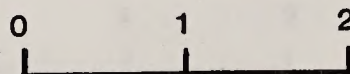
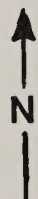
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)



PRIVATE



MILES

Cabezón Proposal

NM-010-022

April 1990

ged nature of the volcanic neck and surrounding foothills also provide visitors with an outstanding opportunity to experience solitude.

The WSA provides scientists with an excellent opportunity to study the internal "plumbing" of a volcano. The volcanic neck has provided geologists with many clues regarding the geologic event that culminated with the spread of the lava flows of Cebollita Mesa. Many of the volcanic centers that contributed lava to the flows are still buried beneath the basalt cap, but Cabazon Peak is one center now exposed for scientific study and inspection.

Cabazon Peak and the bluffs southwest of it are particularly attractive to birds. The most commonly sighted birds are golden eagles, red-tailed hawks, sparrow hawks, horned larks, pinyon jays, ravens, western meadowlarks, and Oregon juncos.

The prehistoric significance of this landmark is evidenced by a Chacoan signal/shrine site atop the Peak. The site and vicinity indicate the Peak served as a station in the complex prehistoric Chacoan signaling system. This signaling sys-

tem, apparently associated with the prehistoric Chacoan road system, ties together central Chaco Canyon with over 80 known related outlier communities dispersed over 30,000 square miles. Due to Cabazon Peak's height, Chacra Mesa, Red Mountain, Mount Taylor, Hosta Butte, the peaks around Cerrillos, and several other known sites important in the Chacoan system are visible.

The Cabazon WSA can be effectively managed as wilderness because of its rugged nature, lack of private inholdings, lack of rights-of-way, and lack of encumbrance by valid existing rights. The wilderness boundary is identified by maintained roads on the north and south, by property boundaries and a maintained road on the west, and by a powerline right-of-way and a maintained road on the east.

The conflicts with other resource uses in this WSA are limited. Grazing use will be allowed to continue. Facility maintenance requirements in the WSA are minimal. There are no currently proposed livestock developments that would be foregone. The mineral survey conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Bureau of Mines revealed that there are no identified mineral re-

CHAMISA WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 13,692 Acres

The Chamisa Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-010-021, is located 21 miles west of San Ysidro and 45 miles northwest of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The WSA includes 13,692 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and 28 acres of private inholdings. The WSA is contiguous with the village of Guadalupe, is bounded on the north and east by a maintained road, on the south by the Cibola National Forest and a maintained road and on the west by a maintained road and fence lines separating it from the Ignacio Chavez WSA.

Approximately 88 percent of the Chamisa WSA is within the historic Ignacio Chavez Land Grant. This grant was awarded to settlers in 1768 by the Spanish government in order to establish communities. Since these communities were never developed, the land was reconveyed to the U.S. Government and placed under administration of the Department of Agriculture. Under the Bankhead-Jones Act of 1937, the land grant was then transferred to the predecessor of BLM for land conservation and utilization programs. The subsurface estate on Grant land was private until it reverted to the U.S. Government in 1989. The subsurface estate outside of the Grant is Federal.

The Chamisa WSA is situated within the Navajo Section of the Colorado Plateau Province. The WSA is characterized by outcrops of sandstone with lesser amounts of shale that have been subjected to intensive erosion. Landforms common to this WSA include mesas, cuevas, rock terraces, retreating escarpments, canyons, and arroyos.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

15,758	Acres recommended wilderness
844	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Chamisa WSA is to designate 15,758 acres as wilderness, including 2,910 acres of BLM land contiguous to the WSA, and release 844 acres to other uses (See Map 1). This recommendation is based on the WSA's high quality wilderness values, proximity to the Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico population centers, and the minimal amount of resource conflicts.

The reasons for not recommending the 844 acres for wilderness designation are to allow for the development of a camping and parking area between the Chamisa and Ignacio Chavez WSAs and to allow for needed access to lands south of the WSA.

The WSA has an overall natural appearance, provides expansive topographical diversity, and exhibits unique vegetation characteristics. The scenic value of the diverse landforms contributes to the area's outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Recreation opportunities include hiking, climbing, hunting, camping, and sightseeing. The WSA's proximity to the Albuquerque and Santa Fe population centers enhances the importance of wilderness designation.

The vegetated slopes and mesa tops in the WSA contrast sharply with arid desert lands to the north-

MAP I

T16N

T15N

IGNACIO CO

MC KINLEY CO
SANDOVAL CO

CHAVEZ

GRANT

CIBOLA

NATIONAL

FOREST

R5W

R4W

R4W

R3W



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



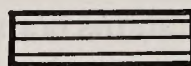
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



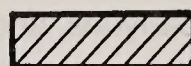
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILD.



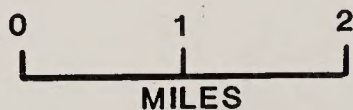
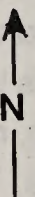
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)



PRIVATE (None)



Chamisa Proposal

NM-010-021

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east and south. Environmental transition zones exhibit excellent scenic and educational values providing scientists with a living laboratory in which to observe natural systems.

The WSA is important habitat for a large variety of game species, including mule deer, elk, Merriam's turkey, black bear, tassel-eared squirrel, cottontail rabbits, and mourning dove. Other wildlife species common to the area include coyotes, badgers, porcupines, Gunnison's prairie dog, golden eagles, sharpshinned hawks, red-tailed hawks, Stellar's jays, pinyon jays and gray-headed juncos.

The Chamisa WSA can be effectively managed as wilderness because of its rugged nature, lack of in-holdings, rights-of-way, or long-term encumbrances by valid existing rights. The WSA is bounded on the north and east by a maintained dirt road, on the south by the Cibola National Forest and a maintained dirt road, and on the west by a maintained dirt road and fencelines. It is recommended the 2,910 acres of BLM land contiguous to the WSA, that contains wilderness characteristics similar to those in the WSA, be included to enhance overall effective management of the designated wilderness.

Conflicts with other resource uses in this WSA are limited. Grazing use will be allowed to continue and facility maintenance requirements in the WSA are minimal. The currently proposed livestock developments could be installed because they are intended to better protect the rangeland in a natural condition and not solely to allow for increased numbers of livestock.

The mineral survey conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Bureau of Mines revealed the area contained a measured resource of 2.2 million tons of coal and indicated resources of 4.7 million tons of coal at depths of 500 feet or less. The coal resource is mostly sub-economic because of the large amounts of overburden and the thin and discontinuous nature of the coal beds.

In the Chamisa WSA, some of the outcropping coal beds could be mined for limited local use, such as domestic heating. In making the recommendation for this WSA, BLM did consider the findings of the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral report regarding coal. However, it was determined that the high wilderness values of the WSA should be preserved even if development of the limited coal resources would be foregone.

The U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Bureau of Mines also found the area has a moderate potential for the occurrence of oil and gas. This rating was based on the presence of oil fields about 12 miles to the west and 10 miles to the north of the WSA, oil shows in nearby drill holes, and favorable reservoir and stratigraphic traps. The resource potential is only moderate because the rocks in the WSA are intruded by volcanic plugs that may have raised the temperature of reservoir rocks above the limit for preservation of oil and gas, and because of possible loss of resources by flushing of reservoir formations with ground water. A total of 35 exploratory holes have been drilled within 2 1/2 miles of the WSA and 1 hole was drilled inside the WSA, but all were dry.

The WSA has inferred sub-economic resources of sand, gravel, and sandstone. Because of the abundance of these materials in the region, distance from markets, and lack of unique properties, they have no current economic potential for development. There is a low potential for metals, uranium, and geothermal energy.

In the 844 acres not being recommended for wilderness designation, 20 acres will be used for a camping and parking area to facilitate recreational uses in this area and in the adjoining Ignacio Chavez recommended wilderness area. The remaining 824 acres not recommended for wilderness designation will allow for the development of needed access to lands south of the WSA.

EMPEDRADO WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 9,007 Acres

The Empedrado Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-010-063, is located about 4 miles northwest of the village of Guadalupe, New Mexico. The WSA contains 9,007 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and 340 acres of private surface inholdings, with 320 of those acres also having private mineral estate. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area). The WSA is bounded on the north, east, and south by maintained roads and on the west by a combination of maintained roads and property boundaries.

In the extreme southern end of the Empedrado WSA, 44 acres are within the historic Ignacio Chavez Land Grant. This grant was awarded to settlers in 1768 by the Spanish government in order to establish communities. Since these communities were never developed, the land was reconveyed to the U.S. Government and placed under administration of the Department of Agriculture. Under the Bankhead-Jones Act of 1937, the land grant was then transferred to the predecessor of BLM for land conservation and utilization programs. In 1989, the 44 acre subsurface estate reverted to the U.S. Government.

The WSA is within the Navajo Section of the Colorado Plateau Province. The Navajo Section is characterized by outcrops of sandstone with lesser amounts of shale that have been subjected to intensive arid cycle erosion. Regional landforms include mesas, cuestras, rock terraces, retreating escarpments, canyons, and arroyos. About 500 feet of relief exists in the Empedrado WSA, ranging from a low elevation of about 6,000 feet in Torreon Wash to 6,552 feet on a mesa top. Major drainages include Arroyo Piedra Lumbre,

Arroyo Empedrado, Torreon Wash, and Arroyo Chico. The overall landform consists of sandstone hills dissected by arroyos.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

9,007	Acres recommended wilderness
0	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Empedrado WSA is to designate the entire area as wilderness (see Map 1). The WSA contains scenic values, outstanding opportunities for solitude, diverse wildlife values, and a minimal amount of resource conflicts. This recommendation for wilderness will further apply to any additional inholding or split-estate acreage acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners.

The WSA's scenic values and diverse landforms contribute to the area's outstanding opportunities for solitude. The WSA's broken terrain, combined with vegetation screening, minimizes the effects of man's activities and enhances opportunities for solitude.

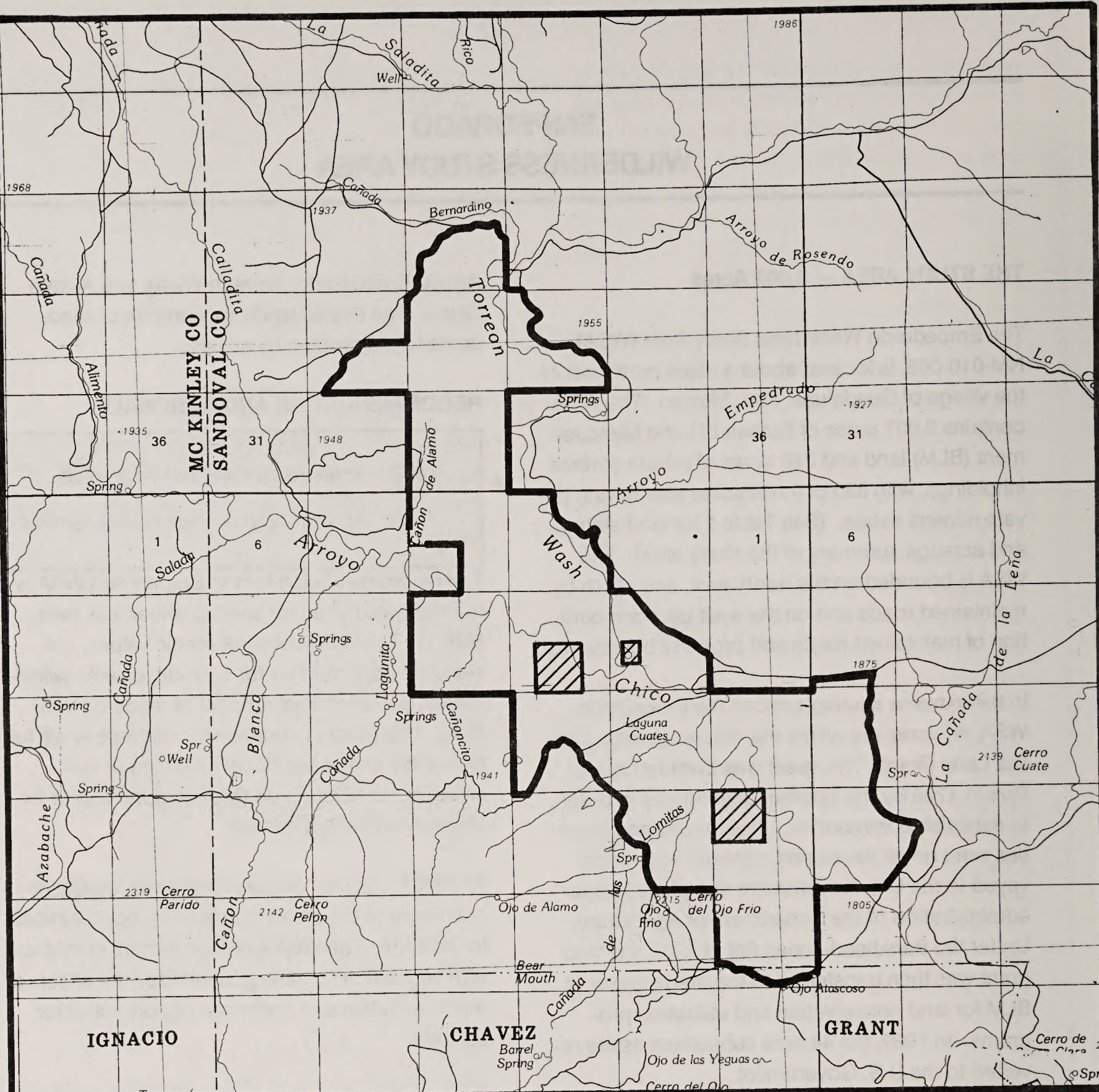
The WSA contains a diversity of wildlife including mule deer, gray fox, coyote, badger, prairie dogs, and scaled quail. Birds of prey common to the area include golden eagle, red-tailed hawk, and great horned owl. The wildlife habitat is enhanced by the riparian vegetation along Arroyo Chico.

The Empedrado WSA could be managed to preserve wilderness values in the long-term. The current and projected use of 325 acres of inholdings is for livestock grazing. Of this total, 325 acres have private mineral estate. While the WSA has

MAP I

T17N

T16N



IGNACIO

CHAVEZ

GRANT

R5W

R4W

R4W

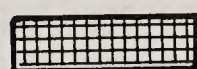
R3W



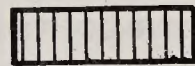
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



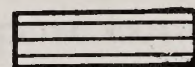
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS (None)



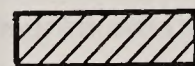
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILD. (None)



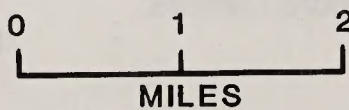
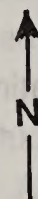
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)



PRIVATE



Empedrado Proposal

NM-010-063

April 1990

been rated as moderate for the potential occurrence of oil and gas, development is not anticipated. The U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral survey report identified that two wells drilled in the WSA were dry. There are nine post-FLPMA oil and gas leases in the WSA. These mineral interests are not expected to be explored or developed before they expire.

Conflicts with other resource uses in this WSA are limited. Grazing use will be allowed to continue. Facility maintenance requirements in the WSA are minimal. The currently proposed livestock developments could be installed because they are intended to better protect the rangeland in a natural condition and not solely to allow for increased numbers of livestock.

The mineral survey conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Bureau of Mines revealed the area contained a measured resource of 3.9 million tons of coal and indicated resources of 9.8 million tons of coal at depths of 500 feet or less.

Approximately 25 million tons are required to start up a mining operation that would produce over 1 million tons a year for a projected 20-year mine life, and would meet power plant requirements. The mineral report only identified measured coal reserves of 3.9 million short tons in the WSA. While there is additional coal resources indicated

in the WSA and on adjacent public lands, there is no evidence presently available to demonstrate the coal would meet the criteria for economic development.

Due to the limited economic viability of the coal and the high natural values of the area, the 1986 Rio Puerco Resource Management Plan decision was not to lease coal in this WSA. The recommendation to designate the WSA wilderness did consider the findings of the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral report regarding coal. However, it was determined that the high wilderness values of the WSA should be preserved even if development of the coal resources would be foregone.

The U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Bureau of Mines also found the area has a moderate potential for the occurrence of oil and gas. This rating was based on the presence of oil fields about 10 miles to the north and 12 miles to the west of the WSA, oil shows in nearby drill holes, and favorable reservoir and stratigraphic traps. The resource potential is only moderate because the rocks are intruded by volcanic plugs that may have raised the temperature of reservoir rocks above the limit for preservation of oil and gas, and because of possible flushing of reservoir formations with ground water.

IGNACIO CHAVEZ WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA - 33,264 Acres

The Ignacio Chavez Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-010-020, is located approximately 25 miles west of San Ysidro and 50 miles northwest of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The WSA contains 33,264 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. The WSA is bounded on the north and west by BLM and private lands, on the south by the Cibola National Forest, and on the east by other BLM land.

Approximately two thirds of the Ignacio Chavez WSA is within the historic Ignacio Chavez Land Grant. This grant was awarded to settlers in 1768 by the Spanish government in order to establish communities. Since these communities were never developed, the land was reconveyed to the U.S. Government and placed under administration of the Department of Agriculture. Under the Bankhead-Jones Act of 1937, the land grant was then transferred to the predecessor of the BLM for land conservation and utilization programs. Sub-surface estate on the Grant land was private until it reverted to the U.S. Government in 1989.

The Ignacio Chavez WSA is situated on the boundary between the Navajo and Datil Sections of the Colorado Plateau Province. Much of the northern part of the WSA is in the Navajo Section and is characterized by outcrops of horizontally bedded sandstone with lesser amounts of shale that have been subjected to intensive erosion. Landforms common to this part of the WSA include mesas, cuestas, rock terraces, retreating escarpments, canyons and arroyos. These landforms are in striking contrast to the southern portion of the WSA which is in the Datil Section. Volcanism in the Cenozoic Era created most of the Datil Section landforms including basalt plains, cinder

cones, exhumed plugs and dikes and extensive talus slopes.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

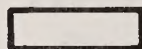
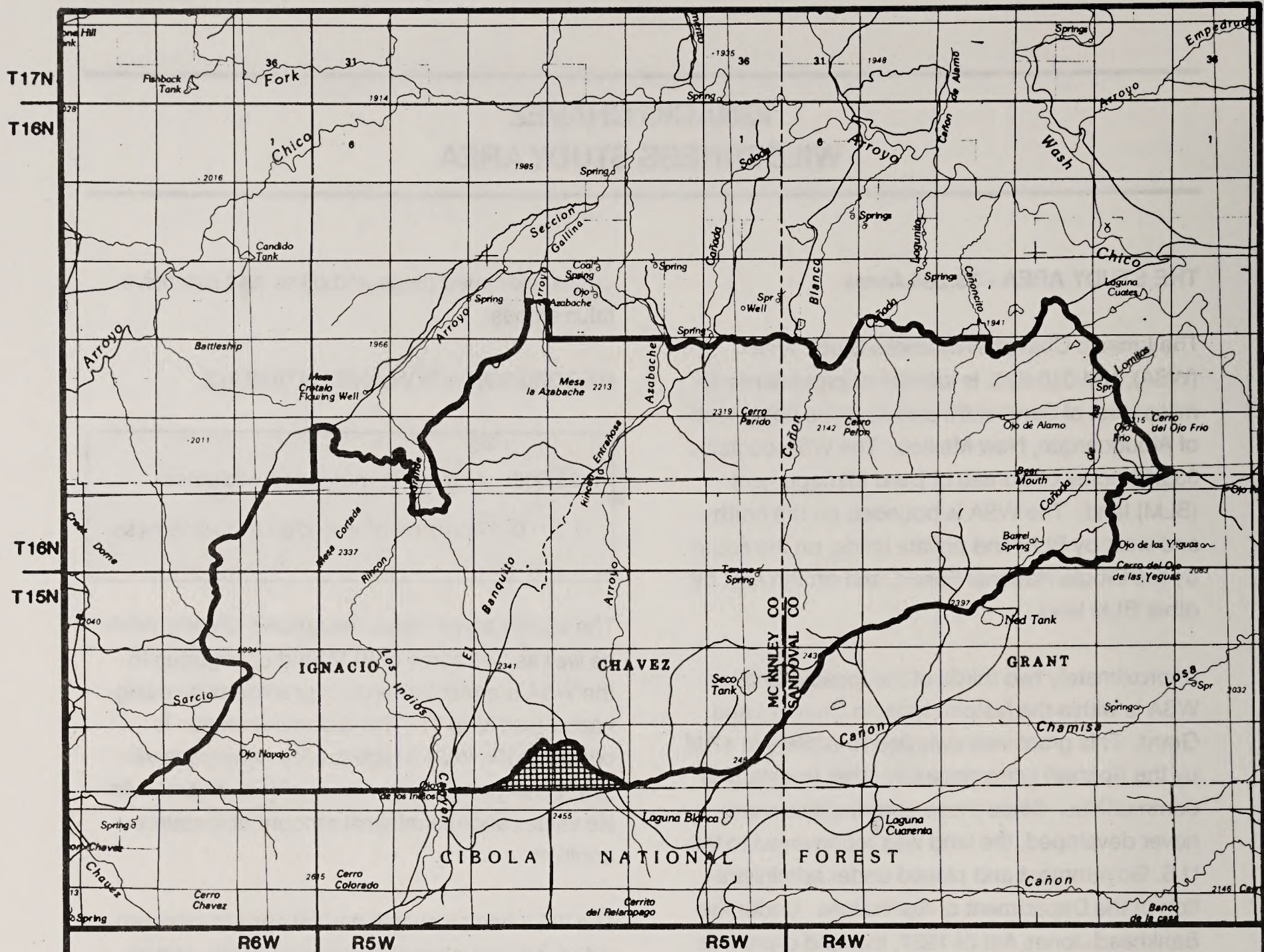
33,609	Acres recommended wilderness
0	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The 33,264 acres within the Ignacio Chavez WSA as well as 345 acres of BLM land contiguous to the WSA are recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). This recommendation is based on the WSA's high quality wilderness values, close proximity to Albuquerque, diverse wildlife values and the minimal amount of resource conflicts.

The WSA has an overall natural appearance, provides expansive topographical diversity, and exhibits unique vegetation characteristics supporting one of the most diverse and productive wildlife habitat areas on BLM land in northwest New Mexico. The WSA's scenic values from diverse landforms and close proximity to the Albuquerque population center contribute to the area's outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Recreation opportunities include hiking, climbing, hunting, camping, and sightseeing.

The densely vegetated slopes and mesa tops contrast sharply with arid desert lands to the northeast and south. Environmental transition zones exhibit excellent scenic and educational values, providing scientists with a living laboratory in which to observe natural systems.

MAP 1



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS



RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDEDNESS (None)



LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS



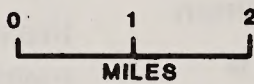
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)



PRIVATE (None)



Ignacio Chavez Proposal
NM-010-020

April 1990

The mixture of pinyon pine and juniper woodlands, ponderosa pine with an oak understory, and open grassland parks along with the protection afforded by the steep slopes and cliffs of Mesa Chivato provide excellent habitat for many species of wildlife. The WSA is important habitat for a large variety of game species including mule deer, elk, Merriam's turkey, black bear, tassel-eared squirrel, cottontail rabbits, and mourning dove. Other wildlife species common to the area include coyotes, badgers, porcupines, Gunnison's prairie dog, golden eagles, sharp-shinned hawks, red-tailed hawks, Stellar's jays, pinyon jays and gray-headed juncos. The elevated sites of Cerro Parido and Bear's Mouth are considered particularly important for golden eagle nesting.

The Ignacio Chavez WSA can be effectively managed as wilderness because of the rugged nature, lack of inholdings, rights-of-way, or long-term encumbrances by valid existing rights. The WSA is bounded on the north and west by maintained dirt roads and BLM and private lands, on the south by the Cibola National Forest and on the east by maintained dirt roads and other BLM land. Adding the 345 acres of BLM land contiguous to the WSA to the wilderness recommendation would enhance the overall effective management of the designated wilderness. This land exhibits wilderness characteristics similar to those in the WSA.

Conflicts with other resource uses in this WSA are limited. Grazing use will be allowed to continue. Facility maintenance needs in the WSA are minimal. Proposed livestock developments could be

installed, as intended, to better protect the rangeland in a natural condition and not solely to allow for increased numbers of livestock.

The mineral survey conducted by U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and U.S. Bureau of Mines revealed the area contained a measured sub-economic coal resource of 19.2 million tons and indicated sub-economic resources of 63 million tons at depths of 500 feet or less. The coal resource is sub-economic because of the large amount of overburden and the thin, lenticular character of the coal beds.

The USGS and U.S. Bureau of Mines also found the area has a moderate potential for occurrence of oil and gas. This rating was based on the presence of oil fields about 10 miles to the north and 3 miles to the west of the WSA, oil shows in nearby drill holes, and presence of favorable reservoir and stratigraphic traps. The resource potential is only moderate because the rocks are intruded by volcanic plugs that may have raised the paleotemperature above the limit needed for preservation of oil and gas. Two wells drilled in the WSA to a depth of 400 feet were dry.

The WSA has inferred sub-economic resources of sand, gravel, and sandstone. Because of the abundance of these materials in the region, distance from markets, and lack of unique properties, they have no current economic potential for development. There is a low potential for all undiscovered metals, uranium, and geothermal energy resources.

LA LENA WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA - 10,438 Acres

The La Lena Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-010-063A, is located approximately 7 miles north of the village of Guadalupe, New Mexico. The WSA contains 10,438 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and 1,280 acres of State land inholdings. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) It is bordered on the east side by maintained roads and on the south, north, and west by a combination of maintained roads and property boundaries.

Landforms in this region include mesas, cuestras, rock terraces, retreating escarpments, canyons, and arroyos. There is approximately 400 feet of relief in the La Lena WSA ranging from 6,100 to 6,500 feet. The major drainages found in the WSA are Arroyo Empedrado and La Canada de La Lena. The overall topography of the WSA is formed by arroyos cutting sandstone capped mesas.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

10,438	Acres recommended wilderness
0	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The recommendation for the La Lena WSA is to designate the entire area as wilderness (see Map 1). This recommendation is based on the WSA's high

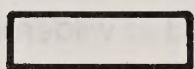
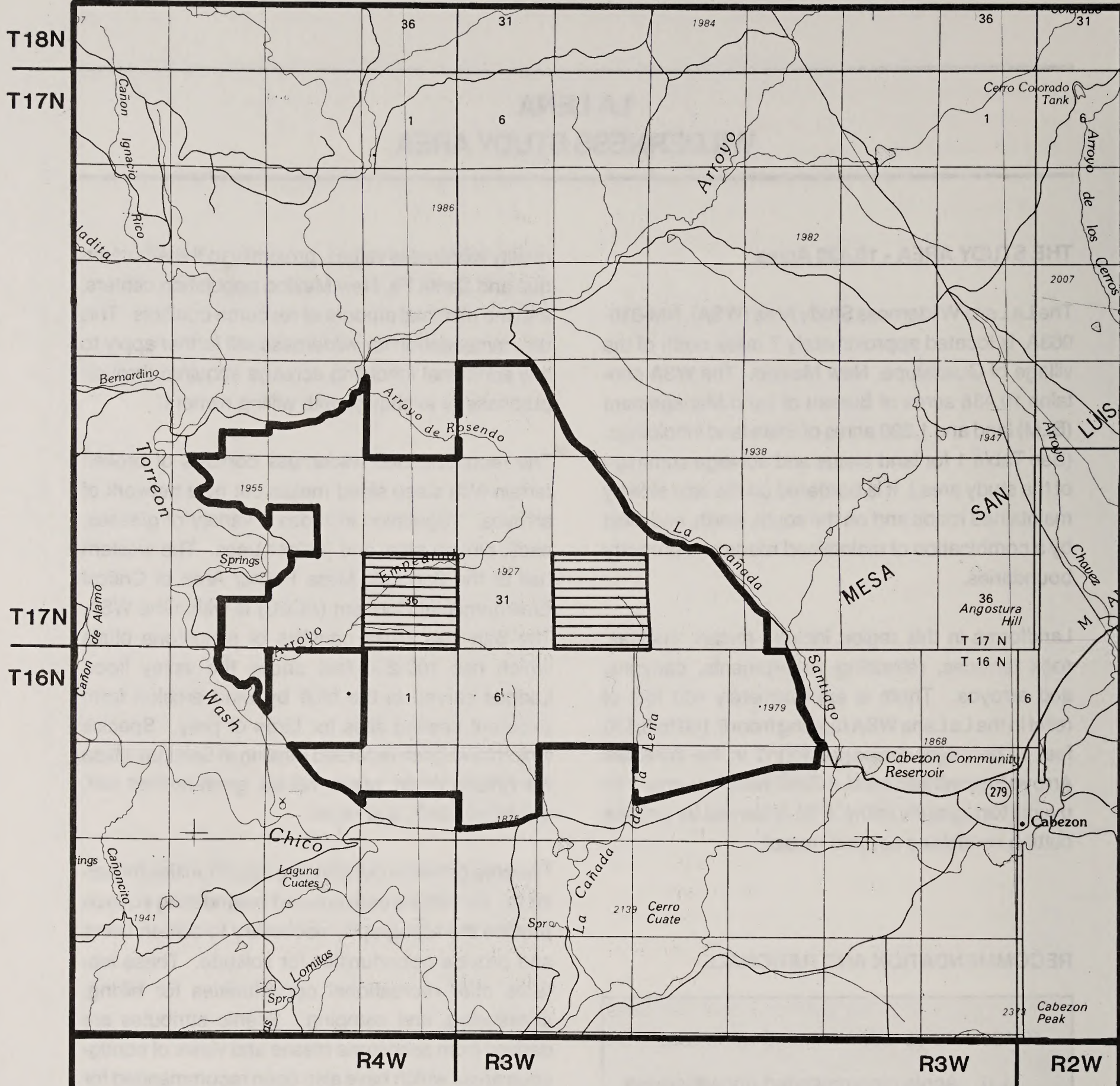
quality wilderness values, proximity to the Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico population centers, and the minimal amount of resource conflicts. This recommendation for wilderness will further apply to any additional inholding acreage acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners.

The recommended wilderness consists of broken terrain with steep sided mesas cut by a network of arroyos. Vegetation includes a variety of grasses, cacti, pinyon pine, and juniper trees. The western half of the San Luis Mesa Raptor Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) is within the WSA. The San Luis Mesa consists of sandstone bluffs which rise 100-200 feet above the valley floor. Ledges carved in the bluff by wind erosion form excellent nesting sites for birds of prey. Species which have been recorded nesting at San Luis Mesa are golden eagle, prairie falcon, great-horned owl, red-tailed hawk, and raven.

The area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. Sandstone canyons and meandering arroyos provide the topography necessary to screen users and provide opportunities for solitude. These features offer recreational opportunities for hiking, sightseeing, and camping. Scenic attributes are derived from sandstone mesas and views of contiguous areas which have also been recommended for wilderness designation.

The WSA can be effectively managed as wilderness. The current and projected use of 1,280 acres of

MAP I



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



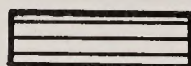
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS (None)



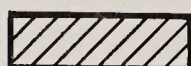
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILD. (None)



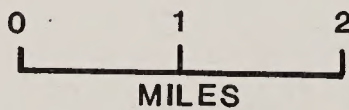
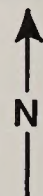
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE



PRIVATE (None)



La Leña Proposal

NM-010-063A

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State land inholdings is for livestock grazing. In addition, the State of New Mexico has expressed interest in exchanging its land for BLM land elsewhere. There are 12 post-FLPMA oil and gas leases in the WSA that are not expected to be explored or developed before they expire in 1994. There are no rights-of-way or mining claims in the WSA.

Conflicts with other resource uses in this WSA are limited. Grazing use will be allowed to continue. Facility maintenance requirements in the WSA are minimal. The currently proposed livestock developments could be installed because they are intended to better protect the rangeland in a natural condition and not solely to allow for increased numbers of livestock.

The mineral survey conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and U.S. Bureau of Mines revealed that the area, including inholdings, contained a measured resource of 21.1 million tons of coal and indicated resources of 23.4 million tons of coal at depths of 500 feet or less.

The coal in this WSA could be developed if sufficient tonnages are present within the 15 to 1 stripping ratio. Approximately 25 million tons are required to start up a mining operation that would produce over 1 million tons a year for a projected 20-year mine life, and would meet power plant requirements. The mineral report identified measured coal reserves of less than 17 million short tons in the WSA, excluding inholdings. While there is additional coal resources indicated in the WSA, there is no evidence presently

available to demonstrate the coal would meet the criteria for economic development.

Due to the limited economic viability of the coal and the high natural values of the area, the 1986 Rio Puerco Resource Management Plan decision was not to lease coal in this WSA. The recommendation to designate the WSA wilderness did consider the findings of the USGS and U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral report regarding coal. However, it was determined that the high wilderness values of the WSA should be preserved even if development of the coal resources would be foregone.

The USGS and U.S. Bureau of Mines also found the area has a moderate potential for the occurrence of oil and gas. This rating was based on the presence of nearby oil fields, oil shows in nearby drill holes, and favorable reservoir and stratigraphic traps. The resource potential is only moderate because the rocks are intruded by volcanic plugs that may have raised the temperature of reservoir rocks above the limit for preservation of oil and gas, and because of possible flushing of reservoir formations with ground water.

The WSA has inferred sub-economic resources of sand, gravel, and sandstone. Because of the abundance of these materials in the region, distance from markets, and lack of unique properties, they have no current potential for development. There is a low potential for all metals, uranium, and geothermal energy.

MANZANO WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 881 Acres

The Manzano Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-010-092, is approximately 16 miles east-southeast of Los Lunas, New Mexico in Torrance County. The WSA is contiguous to and bordered on two sides by the designated U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Manzano Mountain Wilderness. The WSA contains 881 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The Manzano WSA is adjacent to private land and other BLM-administered land on the west, and to private land on the north.

The WSA is situated on the western side of Bosque Peak in the Manzano Mountains and contains the mouth of Garcia Canyon. The area rises from 6,200 feet at its lowest point on the western boundary to 7,400 feet at its highest point on the eastern boundary. Vegetation consists of pinyon pine and juniper trees with some yucca and short grasses established on the western edges. The area is moderately rocky with sandy loam soils typical of those found within an alluvial fan. The WSA provides winter habitat for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

881	Acres recommended wilderness
0	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Manzano WSA is to designate the entire area as wilderness and to add

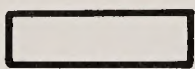
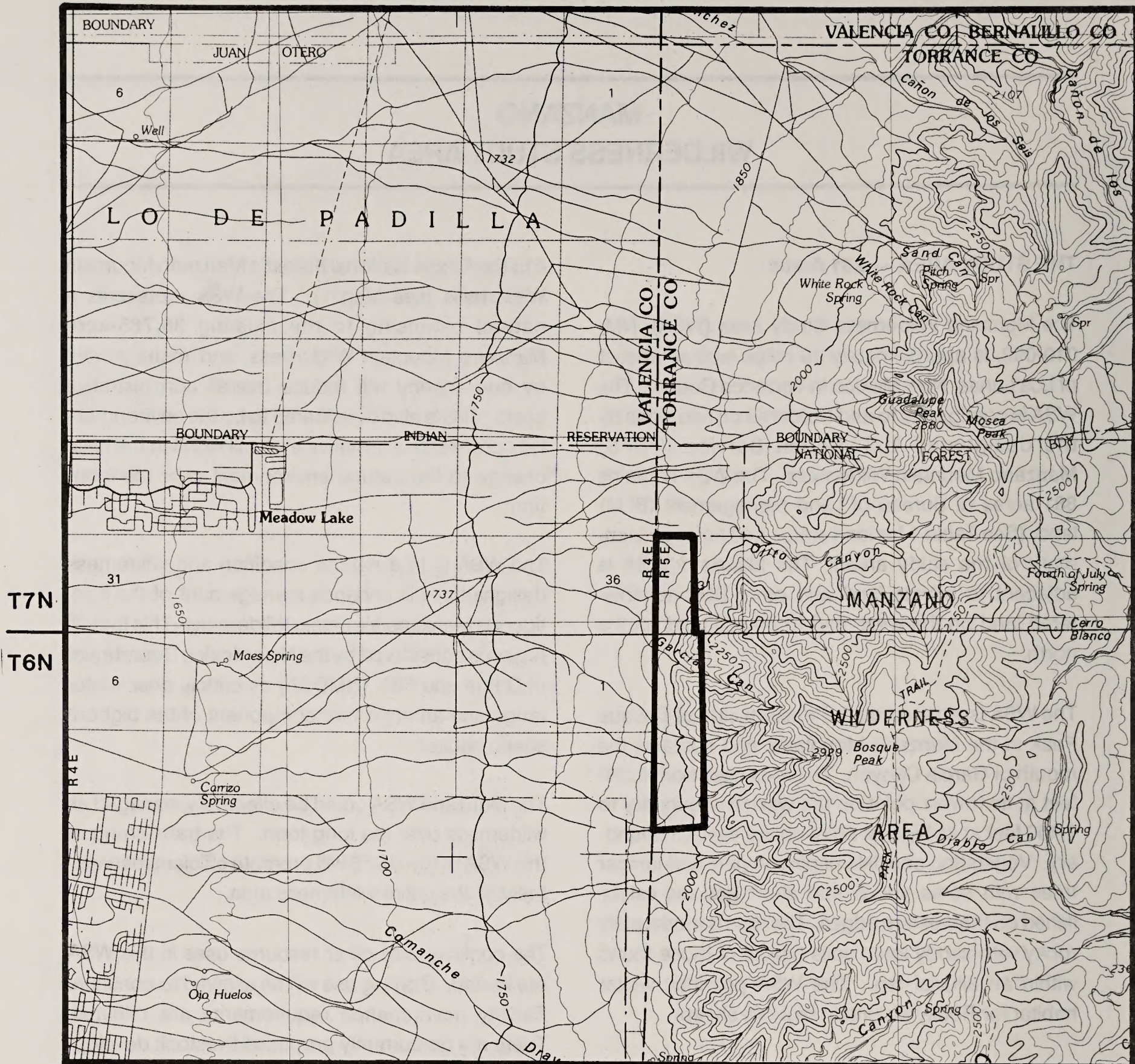
it to the Cibola National Forest's Manzano Mountain Wilderness (see Map 1). The WSA represents a natural extension to the existing 36,785-acre Manzano Mountain Wilderness, and management by one agency will reduce overall administrative costs. This is also considered to be the environmentally preferable alternative as it will result in the least change to the natural environment over the long-term.

The WSA is in a natural condition and wilderness designation will enhance management of the contiguous Manzano Mountain Wilderness. This foothill region is considered by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) as critical deer winter range and an important component of the bighorn sheep habitat.

The Manzano WSA could be effectively managed as wilderness over the long-term. The transferring of this WSA to the USFS will promote efficient management of the entire wilderness area.

The conflicts with other resource uses in this WSA are limited. Grazing use will be allowed to continue. Facility maintenance requirements are minimal. There are no currently proposed livestock developments that would be foregone. The area has been rated by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the U.S. Bureau of Mines as having a low energy and mineral resource potential.

MAP I



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



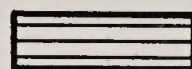
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS (None)



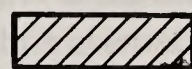
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILD. (None)



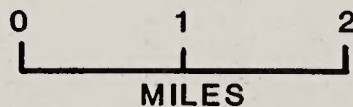
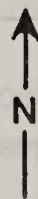
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)



PRIVATE (None)



Manzano Proposal

NM-010-092

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OJITO WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA - 10,903 Acres

The Ojito Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-010-024, is located approximately 5 miles southwest of San Ysidro, New Mexico. The WSA contains 10,903 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, with 640 acres of State land and approximately 160 acres of private land included as inholdings. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The WSA is delineated on the north by property boundaries, on the south by a combination of a gas pipeline right-of-way (ROW) and a maintained road, on the west by a power line ROW, and on the east by a combination of a maintained road and a ridgeline.

Landforms in this region include mesas, cuevas, rock terraces, retreating escarpments, canyons, arroyos, and badlands. The overall landscape of the WSA is formed by arroyos cutting sandstone-capped mesas. Bands of shales, sandstones, and limestone highlight the canyon walls. Extending westward are rock terraces dissected by rocky canyons that extend to expansive plateaus and mesa tops. Escarpments step back from the uplands and are honeycombed with pockets of impressive scenic features. Small areas contain pockets of sculptured badland formations of sandstone in many shapes and sizes. Other sheltered pockets contain residual ponderosa pine populations that are rare in this environment. Still other pockets reveal a variety of features including petrified wood and multi-colored rock layers.

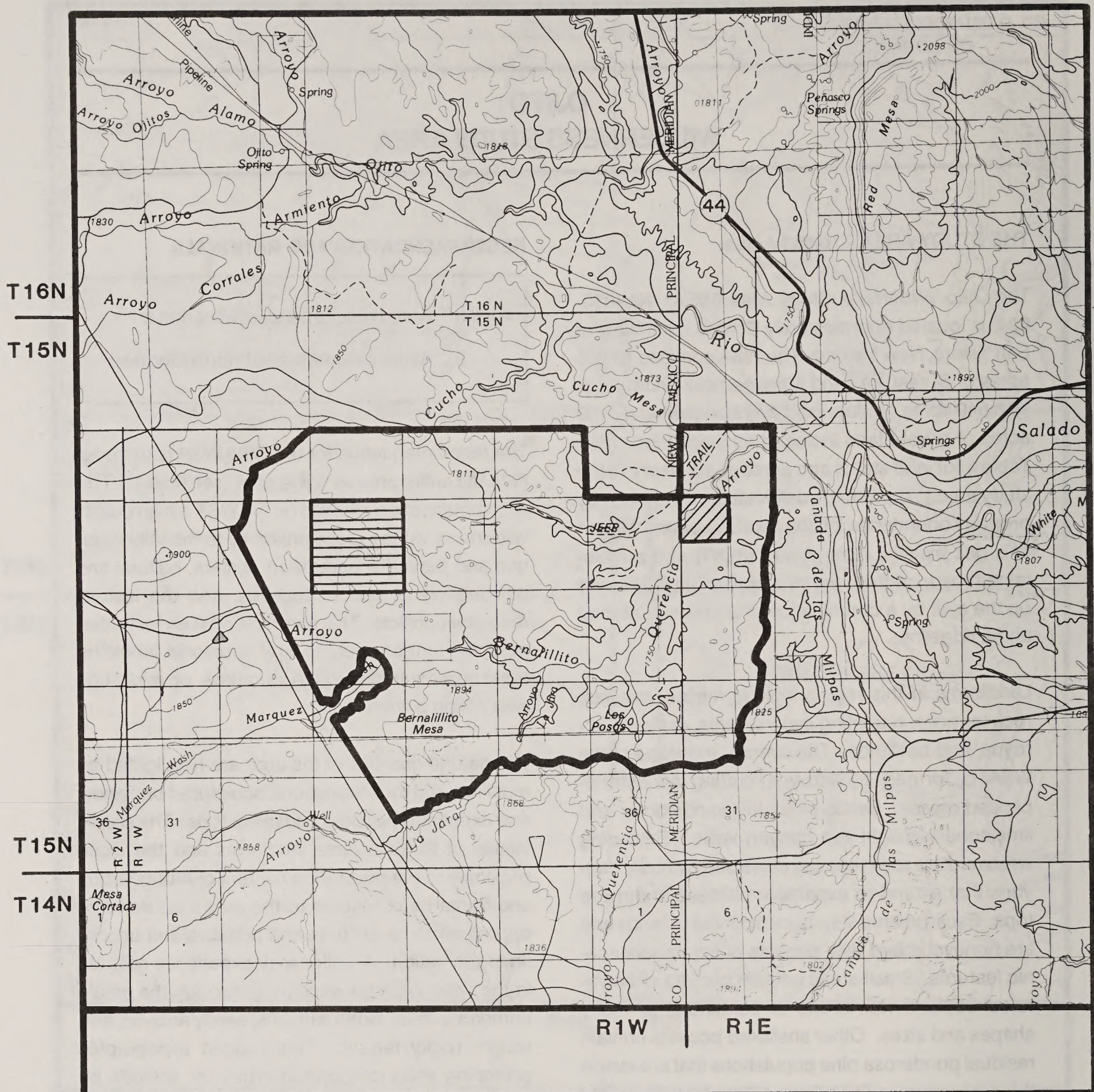
RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

10,903	Acres recommended wilderness
0	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Ojito WSA is to designate the entire area as wilderness (see Map 1). This recommendation is based on the WSA's high quality wilderness values, close proximity to the Albuquerque and Santa Fe population centers, cultural and paleontological special features, and the lack of resource conflicts. This recommendation for wilderness will further apply to any additional inholding acreage acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners.

The natural qualities of the area are highlighted by multi-colored rock formations, sculptured badlands, and expansive plateaus and mesa tops. The scenic values of these diverse landforms and the close proximity to the population centers of Albuquerque and Santa Fe contribute to the area's outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. A visitor may experience solitude in the Ojito WSA by wandering through the area's numerous steep-sided canyons, sandy arroyos, and rough, rocky terrain. This rugged topographic screening enhances opportunities for solitude by protecting visitors from the sights and sounds of

MAP I



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS




**RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS (None)**

LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILD. (None)

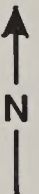
[illegible]

SPLIT ESTATE (None)

STATE



PRIVATE



A horizontal scale bar with tick marks at 0, 1, and 2. The word "MILES" is centered below the bar.

Ojito Proposal

NM-010-024

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others. The varied landscape also provides outstanding photographic and sightseeing opportunities.

Although wildlife numbers are not high, a diversity of species is present. The bluffs and mesa edges in the WSA provide excellent nesting habitat for raptors, swallows, and swifts. Scaled quail and mourning doves inhabit the brushy draws and rocky wooded hillsides. Mule deer occupy the juniper and pinyon pine woodlands and a small band of antelope range into the northwest corner of the WSA. Other wildlife common to the area include coyote, fox, rabbit, horned lark, and raven. Both bobcats and mountain lions have also been sighted in the area. Two plant species on the New Mexico State endangered species list occur in the WSA; grama grass cactus (Toumeyia papyracantha) and Knight's milkvetch (Astragalus knightii).

The cultural resource density within this WSA is projected to be particularly high and includes Archaic, other prehistoric, and historic sites. Archaic sites range from small lithic scatters to large scatters with ground stone, cists, ash and burned rocks. The prehistoric sites include small pueblos of 30 or more rooms. The historic sites are related to Spanish settlement prior to the 18th century.

Paleontological sites have also been found. The fossil resources include petrified wood, plant fragments, mollusks, and dinosaur bones. Of particular interest, dinosaur bones representing a group not previously known in New Mexico are being excavated from the WSA.

The area can be managed to preserve the quality of the wilderness characteristics. The area contains no mining claims and there are only three post-FLPMA oil and gas leases. Based on the low potential for the occurrence of oil and gas resources in the WSA, these leases are not expected to be explored or developed before they expire in 1995. There are no ROWs in the WSA. Vehicle ways form portions of the eastern, southern, and western boundaries. Non-Federal property forms the northern boundary.

Conflicts with other resource uses in this WSA are limited. Grazing use will be allowed to continue. Facility maintenance requirements in the WSA are minimal. There are no currently proposed livestock developments that would be foregone.

The mineral survey conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and U.S. Bureau of Mines revealed the area contained an inferred sub-economic resource of 6 million tons of gypsum. The gypsum resource is sub-economic because large amounts of overburden would have to be removed. In addition, large reserves of gypsum are available a few miles east of the WSA and elsewhere in the United States. The USGS and U.S. Bureau of Mines also found the area has a moderate potential for the occurrence of uranium but determined the grade to be far below that of economic deposits. The Ojito WSA was found to have a low mineral resource potential for all metals, zeolite minerals, sand and gravel, and a low energy resource potential for oil, gas, coal, and geothermal resources.

PETACA PINTA WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 11,668 Acres

The Petaca Pinta Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-020-014, is located in Cibola County in west-central New Mexico, 20 miles south of Laguna Pueblo and 50 miles west-southwest of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The WSA includes 11,668 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. Surface inholdings include 40 acres of private land and 39 acres of State land. The ownership of the mineral estate is split between public and private ownership, with 5,048 acres being publicly-owned and 6,620 acres privately-owned. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The WSA is bounded on the northwest and west by the Laguna Indian Reservation and on the north, south, and east by maintained dirt roads, State land, and private land.

Landforms in Petaca Pinta WSA vary from gentle grassland to extremely rugged mesas and canyons. Petaca Pinta Mesa dominates the landscape in the WSA. This isolated mesa rises about 1,000 feet above the surrounding land. Blue Water Canyon, in the southwest corner of the WSA, is a deep and narrow box canyon. Petaca Pinta WSA also contains a maze of smaller box canyons, a badlands environment, and a lava flow on the north. Elevation varies from 5,800 feet to 7,300 feet. Vegetation consists of mixed shrub-grassland with scattered juniper and pinyon pine trees.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

10,631	Acres recommended wilderness
1,037	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The recommendation is to designate 10,631 acres within the Petaca Pinta WSA as wilderness and release 1,037 acres to other uses (see Map 1). The recommendation is based on the area's overall high quality wilderness values and the presence of four earthen reservoirs which locally impact the naturalness in the area not recommended for wilderness designation. This wilderness recommendation will further apply to any additional inholdings or split-estate acreage acquired through exchange or purchase from willing owners.

The majority of this WSA is recommended as wilderness. On the 1,037 acres not recommended for wilderness designation, there are no surface disturbing activities presently proposed.

The Petaca Pinta WSA consists of extremely rugged mesas and canyons. Petaca Pinta Mesa, near the center of the WSA, rises almost 1,000 feet above the surrounding land. The area recommended for wilderness designation is in a natural condition and provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The imprints of man within this area are minimal, and physical isolation ensures opportunities for high quality solitude.

The area recommended for wilderness designation displays high scenic values and is well suited to day hiking, backpacking, and nature photography. Special features in the recommended wilderness include the spectacular sandstone escarpments and Blue Water Canyon. The Blue Water Canyon is a box canyon with a number of perennial seeps supporting a riparian community that includes species such as cottonwood, willow, and cattail. Wildlife species in the area include mule deer, coyotes, badgers, golden eagles, red-tailed hawks, great horned owls, and mountain lions.

MAP I

T7N

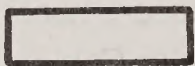
T6N

T6N

T5N

R7W

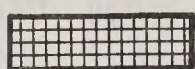
R6W



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILD.(None)



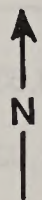
SPLIT ESTATE



STATE



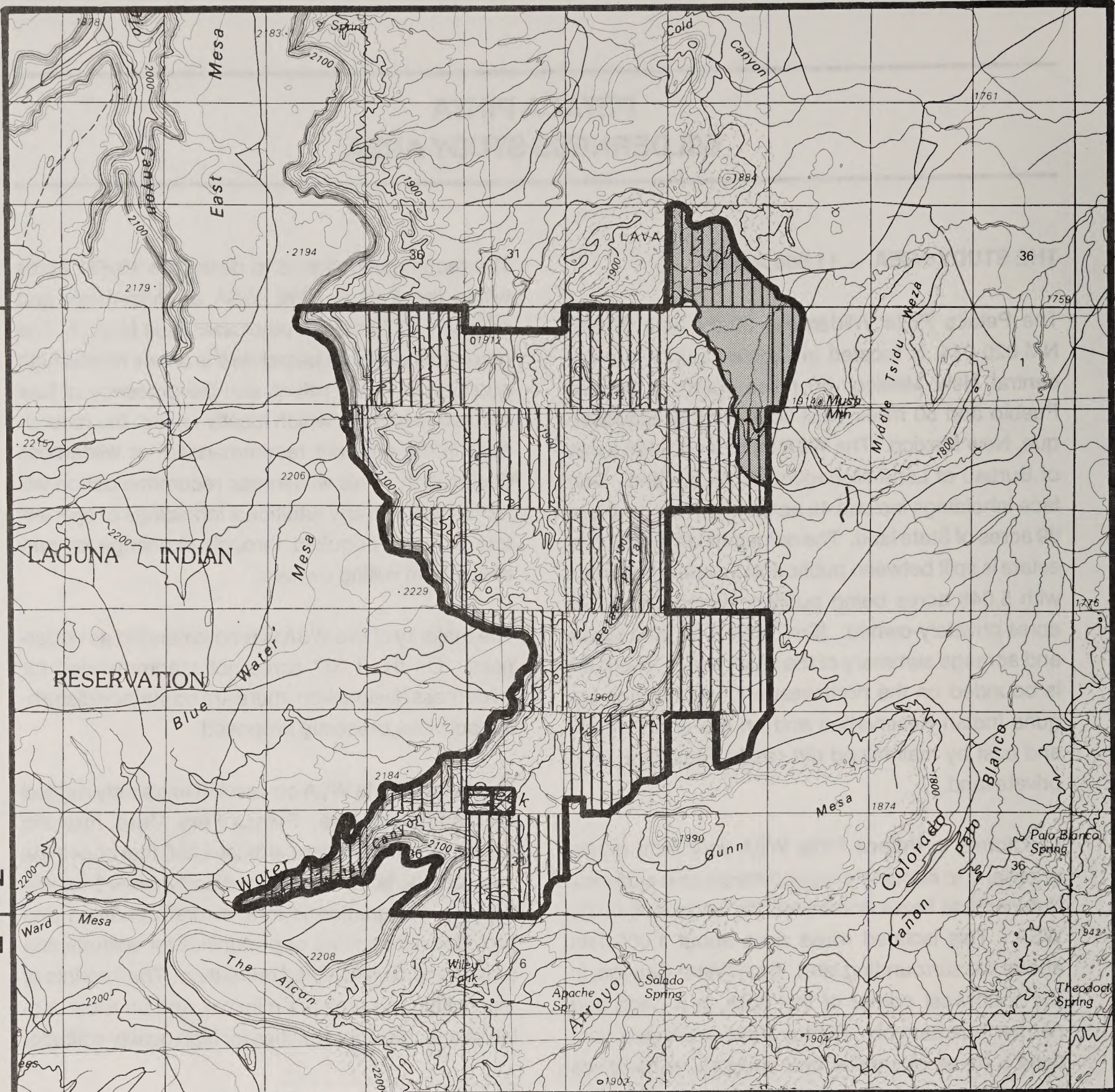
PRIVATE



Petaca Pinta Proposal

NM-020-014

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The area recommended for wilderness designation could be managed to preserve the existing wilderness values. The current and projected use of the surface is for continued livestock grazing. In addition, the owner of the private mineral estate has indicated an interest in exchanging this estate for Federal minerals outside the WSA. There are no Federal leases, mining claims, or rights-of-way (ROWs) in the WSA.

Conflicts with other resource uses in the area recommended for wilderness designation are limited. Grazing use will be allowed to continue and facility maintenance needs in the WSA are minimal. There are no proposed livestock developments which would be foregone.

The mineral survey conducted by U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and U.S. Bureau of Mines revealed the WSA has a moderate potential for the occurrence of oil and gas, especially along the eastern side of the area. This rating was based on drilling

activity 8 miles or more north and south of the WSA which indicated a rapid eastward thickening of the sedimentary rocks favorable for the accumulation of oil and gas. However, several oil and gas exploration wells have been drilled within 26 miles of the WSA, and no commercial production exists. The WSA has a low potential for metallic resources and there is no resource potential for coal.

The 1,037 acres that are not recommended for wilderness designation are within the northeast portion of the WSA. This area contains low quality wilderness values that have been degraded by four earthen reservoirs. Reconstruction of these breached earthen reservoirs has been deemed essential to protection of both on-site and off-site soil and vegetation resources.

ANTELOPE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 20,710 Acres

The Antelope Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-020-053, is located in Socorro County, approximately 15 miles southeast of Socorro, New Mexico. The WSA includes 20,710 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and 680 acres of State inholdings. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The WSA is bounded on the west by the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge and on the east by the White Sands Missile Range (WSMR).

The WSA is a rolling desert prairie with elevations ranging from 4,767 feet to 5,065 feet. The foothills of Little San Pascual Mountain extend into a small portion of the WSA along its southwest boundary.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

- | |
|--|
| o Acres recommended wilderness |
| 20,710 Acres recommended nonwilderness |

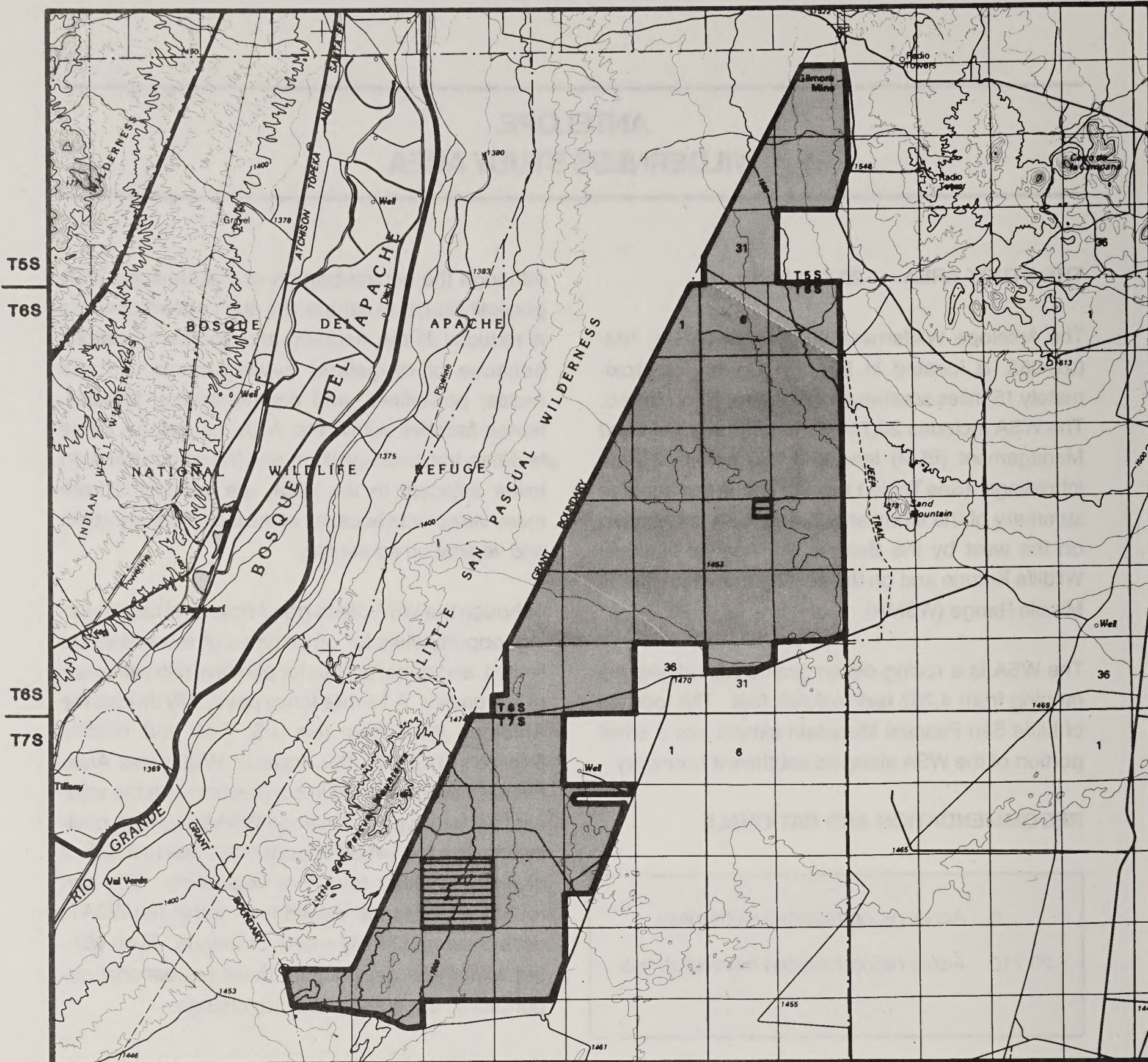
The Antelope WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). The area contains marginal wilderness values relating to naturalness, outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, and the lack of special features.

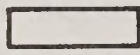
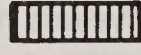

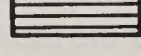
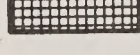
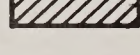
Although the central portion of the Antelope WSA generally appears natural, the quality of naturalness is reduced in the northern and southern portions because of rangeland developments, access routes, powerlines, and communication facilities. Range facilities within the WSA, as well as range facilities, transmission lines, and the communication tower adjacent to the WSA, are noticeable from many viewpoints because of the lack of topographic and vegetation screening.

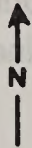
Although the WSA offers good dove and quail hunting, opportunities for other types of recreation are limited, and opportunities for primitive recreation are of low quality. A 13-mile fence physically divides the Antelope WSA from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) San Pascual Wilderness Area. Even when considered in conjunction with the adjacent wilderness, the Antelope WSA lacks high quality primitive recreation opportunities due to a lack of diversity in either terrain or vegetation. The surrounding landscape viewed from within the WSA is not considered highly scenic or unique. Even without wilderness designation, these recreational opportunities are not expected to change.

Opportunities for solitude are considered outstanding. However, these opportunities exist primarily because of the remoteness of the area and because the area lacks special features to attract people. The quality of this solitude is reduced in the northern and

MAP 1



- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---------------------|
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None) |  | SPLIT ESTATE (None) |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |  | STATE |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None) |  | PRIVATE (None) |



Antelope Proposal
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southern portions of the WSA by a relatively narrow configuration and visual intrusions.

Many of the access routes within the WSA lead to water developments (windmills, pipelines, storage tanks, troughs) which require frequent maintenance using motor vehicles. This frequent use reduces the ability to manage the area to provide high quality wilderness values. Frequent use will maintain the diminished naturalness along the 7 1/2 miles of existing vehicle ways.

Approximately 30,287 acres within the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, adjacent to the Antelope WSA, is designated as the San Pascual Wilderness. This area is much more natural than the

Antelope WSA and contains greater diversity in terrain, vegetation, and special features. Also, comments received from the USFWS oppose wilderness designation for the Antelope WSA because of the quality of Antelope's naturalness, and the impact of Antelope's wilderness designation on access to and manageability of the San Pascual Wilderness.

There are no known special habitats or wildlife species in the WSA that are dependent upon wilderness designation. In addition to the adjacent San Pascual Wilderness, other existing U.S. Forest Service (USFS) wilderness areas and BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness are common in the region.

After a full review of the WSA, it is recommended for wilderness. In the 37,500-acre area, there are no known special habitats or wildlife species dependent upon wilderness designation. The area is recommended for wilderness because of its naturalness and the quality of its scenery.

The 37,500-acre area recommended for wilderness is a high quality area with a high degree of naturalness. The area is recommended for wilderness because of its naturalness and the quality of its scenery.

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA - 68,761 Acres

The Continental Divide Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-020-044, is located in Catron County, 60 air miles west-southwest of Socorro, New Mexico. The WSA includes 68,761 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. The WSA also contains 1,680 acres of private land and 3,420 acres of State inholdings. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area). The WSA is bounded on the north and south by private and State lands, on the east by State Highway 78, and on the west by roads and State land.

The WSA is located along the Continental Divide, which runs east-west. Pelona Mountain, at 9,212 feet, is the highest point in the WSA. The lowest elevation, occurring on the western edge of the WSA, is 6,785 feet. The WSA is characterized as a transition zone of grassland, pinyon-juniper, and ponderosa pine vegetation.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

37,599	Acres recommended wilderness
31,162	Acres recommended nonwilderness

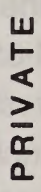
The recommendation for this WSA is to designate 37,599 acres as wilderness and release the remaining 31,162 acres for uses other than wilderness (see

Map 1). The area recommended for wilderness contains the highest wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, and primitive recreation. It also includes exceptional supplemental values such as outstanding scenic qualities, diverse ecosystems, and significant cultural resources. The area not recommended for wilderness is of a different physical character than the land recommended for wilderness. The area has less wilderness quality and lacks the supplemental values that characterize the portion recommended suitable. Additionally, the lands not recommended for wilderness also contain moderate resource potential for oil and gas, have unrecognizable boundaries, and present manage-ability problems. This recommendation for wilderness will further apply to any additional inholding acreage acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners.

More than half of this WSA is recommended for wilderness. In the 31,162 acres not recommended for wilderness, possible oil and gas exploration and development could occur due to moderate resource potential ratings.

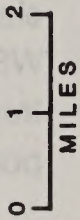
The 37,599 acres recommended for wilderness designation are ecologically diverse, representing a grassland transition zone, a pinyon-juniper woodland, and a high elevation ponderosa pine forest. This diversity in terrain and vegetation has created a highly scenic area along the Continental Divide.

T7S



← 2 →

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None)



Continental Divide Proposal

NM-020-044

April 1990

This area contains significant habitat for big game and nongame animals. Golden eagles and other raptors nest in the area. Wintering bald eagles have been observed in the WSA.

The area contains high quality primitive recreation values including hunting, hiking, backpacking, camping, and horseback riding. These opportunities are likely to be enhanced by the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail which is expected to be routed through this area. Several large canyons, with hundreds of feet of relief provide secluded areas for experiencing solitude. The relatively large size of the area, coupled with its rugged terrain, further enhances these values.

Known archeological sites include Bat Cave which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The area recommended for wilderness can also be managed to preserve the quality of the wilderness characteristics. Vehicle routes form portions of the eastern, southern, and western boundaries. Other boundaries are readily identifiable because of the natural change in terrain. The topography and vegetation of the area and the absence of conflicting land uses or private rights would allow the BLM to manage the recommended area to ensure its preservation and use as wilderness. Approximately 1,600 acres of private land would be excluded from the wilderness area, enhancing BLM's ability to manage the area.

The conflicts with other resource uses of land recommended for wilderness designation in this WSA are limited. Grazing use will be allowed to continue and facility maintenance requirements in this portion of the WSA are minimal. There are no currently proposed livestock developments that would be foregone. The area has been rated by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Bureau of Mines as having moderate resource potential for oil and gas. The report also rated the WSA as having low potential for tin; a downgrading of this classification from the BLM rating which was identified in the Final EIS. This new information, however, does not change

BLM's recommendation. Some exploration for oil and gas could be foregone in the area recommended for wilderness. However, due to terrain features and accessibility, the majority of oil and gas exploration is anticipated to occur in the areas recommended for nonwilderness.

The 31,162 acres not recommended for wilderness designation are of a different physical character. Although they can be managed as wilderness, other factors exist which support a nonwilderness recommendation. These 31,162 acres comprise three separate parcels identified as A, B, and C. (See Map 1.)

Parcel A is approximately 950 acres and is located on the western end of the WSA at one of the primary access points to the Continental Divide WSA. The reason this area is not recommended for wilderness is because of terrain, boundary features, access, and manageability. By not including this parcel as part of the Continental Divide Wilderness, access to wilderness would be improved by providing opportunities for trailhead development, including room for parking near the mouth of Cottonwood Canyon. Exclusion of this parcel from wilderness would also improve manageability because terrain features would make the wilderness boundary much more identifiable, and conflicts relating to maintenance of the pipeline which crosses through this parcel would be eliminated.

Parcel B is approximately 5,550 acres and is located on the southwest corner of the WSA. This parcel is not recommended for wilderness because of manageability concerns and the quality of wilderness values. This parcel contains two sections (1,280 acres) of private land which present manageability problems. Additionally, naturalness is diminished on this parcel due to the visibility and amount of livestock developments that exist on this land.

Parcel C is approximately 24,660 acres and is located on the east side of the WSA. This parcel is not recommended for wilderness because of the quality of naturalness and solitude and manageability con-

cerns. This parcel is comprised of open grassland which is less natural than the 15,000 acres of open grassland in the recommended area. This area does not provide the same degree of solitude offered by the more diverse vegetation and landform of the area recommended for wilderness. Solitude and naturalness are also diminished by numerous access routes (12 miles) which criss-cross the parcel. This recommendation would make this area available for oil and gas exploration and development. The area has moderate potential for the oc-

currence of oil and gas, and ongoing exploration is taking place nearby.

In parcels A, B, and C, there are no known special features, habitats, or wildlife species that would depend on wilderness designation. Although there is some exploration projected for these parcels, it is not expected that this will substantially change the condition of the vegetation or the quality of the pronghorn antelope habitat.

DEVIL'S BACKBONE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 8,904 Acres

The Devil's Backbone Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-020-047, is located in Socorro County, approximately 15 miles southwest of Socorro, New Mexico. The WSA includes 8,904 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The WSA lies at the southern end of the Magdalena Mountains. The northern boundary of the WSA adjoins the Cibola National Forest. The remainder of the WSA is surrounded by State and private lands and all boundaries follow legal subdivision lines.

The WSA includes a portion of the rugged and broken southern flank of the Magdalena Mountains. The WSA rises precipitously out of the surrounding desert grassland and culminates in sharp, knife-like ridges and stark, rocky peaks. Elevations range from 5,400 feet to 8,100 feet. The extreme topography is occasionally interspersed with small park-like areas on mountain and ridgetops, on benches, and in the saddles between peaks.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0	Acres recommended wilderness
8,904	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The Devil's Backbone WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). This recommendation is based on the fact that while the area contains the wilderness values to meet the study

criteria, the area's naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are not considered to be of a quality to merit inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS).

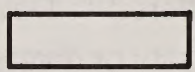
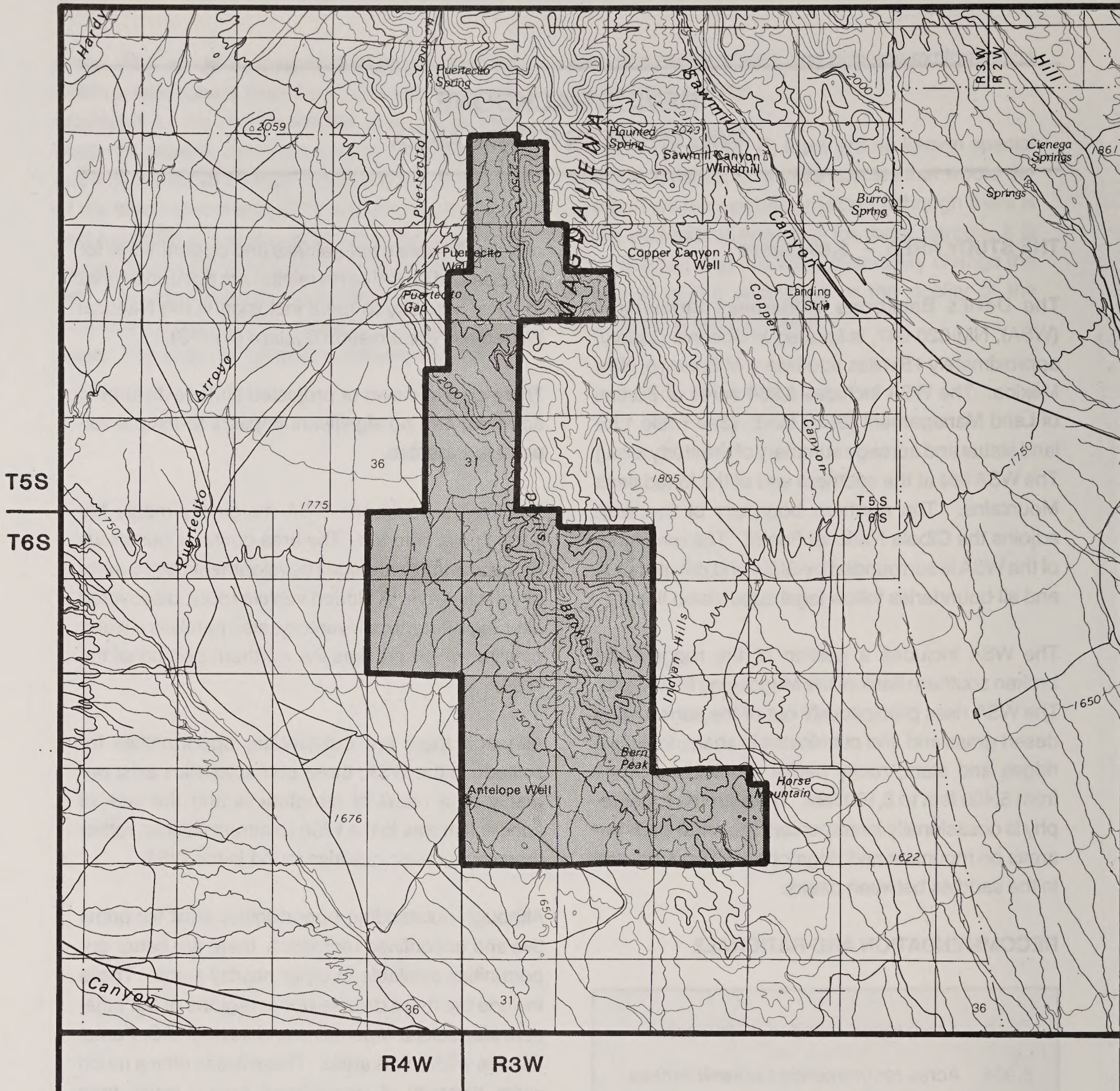
There are no known or projected surface disturbing activities, and no significant impacts to natural values are expected.

The Devil's Backbone WSA marginally meets the naturalness criterion. The area contains numerous rangeland and watershed developments and 5 miles of vehicle ways. A bladed vehicle route, discovered after the wilderness inventory, also parallels a water pipeline which crosses the northern portion of the WSA.

Although there are outstanding opportunities for solitude in the WSA, these characteristics exist primarily as a result of remoteness and the lack of special features in the WSA to attract visitors, rather than any intrinsic qualities found in the WSA.

Although outstanding opportunities exist for primitive and unconfined recreation, there are better opportunities available in other nearby areas. These include the more diverse upper regions of the adjacent Magdalena Mountains and several U.S. Forest Service wilderness areas. These areas offer a much wider diversity of recreational opportunities than those present in the Devil's Backbone WSA. The primitive recreation opportunities offered in Devil's Backbone WSA are of no greater quality or diversity than in any undeveloped mountainous area in the region.

MAP I



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS (None)



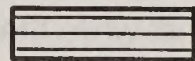
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



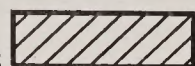
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
(None)



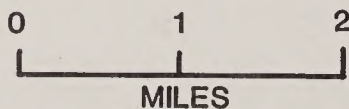
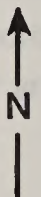
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)



PRIVATE (None)



Devil's Backbone Proposal

NM-020-047

April 1990

Golden eagles have been known to nest in the WSA, however, there are no known special habitats nor

In the Devil's Backbone WSA, there are no known or projected activities, no valid existing rights, and no projected energy or mineral exploration. Therefore, even without wilderness designation, the quality and level of the values now found in the WSA are not expected to significantly change.

44

EAGLE PEAK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 43,960 Acres

The Eagle Peak Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-020-019, is located in western Catron County, approximately 100 air miles northwest of Socorro, New Mexico. The WSA contains 43,960 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land including 10,892 acres of split-estate (Federal surface, non-Federal subsurface). There are 160 acres of State and 840 acres of private inholdings. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The WSA is generally bordered to the north, east, and south by private land and to the west by a county road.

The Eagle Peak WSA consists of rolling topography broken by sandstone and basalt mesas and canyons. Volcanic features, including large cinder cones and associated lava flows, are also present and result in a topographically diverse WSA. Elevations rise from 6,400 feet to 7,550 feet, with the highest elevations occurring in the eastern portion of the WSA.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

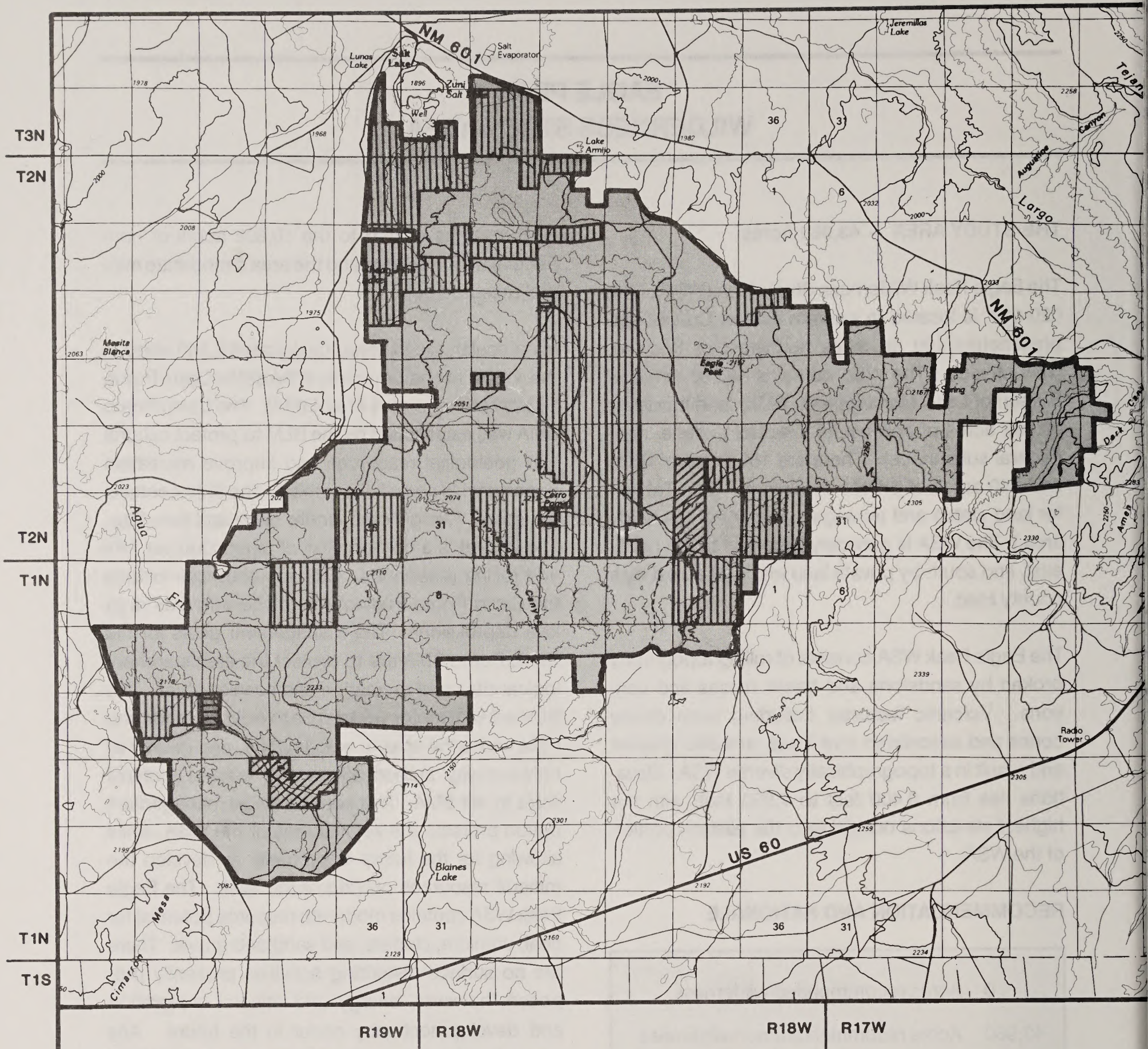
0	Acres recommended wilderness
43,960	Acres recommended nonwilderness

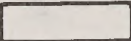
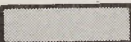

The Eagle Peak WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). The recommendation is based on the manageability of the area as


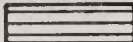

wilderness as related to the 10,892 acres of non-Federal mineral estate and the area's moderate mineral resource potential.

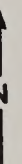
In particular, the BLM has designated 8,840 acres in the southwest portion of the WSA as the Cerro Pomo Special Management Area (SMA). The Cerro Pomo SMA was established by the BLM to protect cultural and geological resources and improve recreation opportunities and wildlife habitat. The SMA contains the scenic Cerro Pomo cinder cone and lava flow. The habitat is a combination of pinyon/juniper hills and rolling grasslands. Cultural resources include the Cerro Pomo Pueblo village site with two large kiva depressions. The management goals for the Cerro Pomo SMA are to protect the area's archeological sites and recreation and scenic values. The BLM will limit motor vehicle use to existing roads and trails, close the area to woodcutting, and restrict all rights-of-way authorizations and mineral material sales in the SMA. This administrative management option protects the key features of the WSA, while allowing for the future opportunity to develop the mineral resources outside of the SMA. The Eagle Peak WSA contains moderate resource potential for coal, uranium, cinders, and sand and gravel. There are no surface disturbing activities presently proposed; however, energy and mineral exploration and development may occur in the future. Any mineral exploration and development activity will be regulated to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation.

MAP 1



- | | |
|---|--|
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None) |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None) |

- | | |
|---|--------------|
|  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | STATE |
|  | PRIVATE |



Eagle Peak Proposal
NM-020-019

April 1990

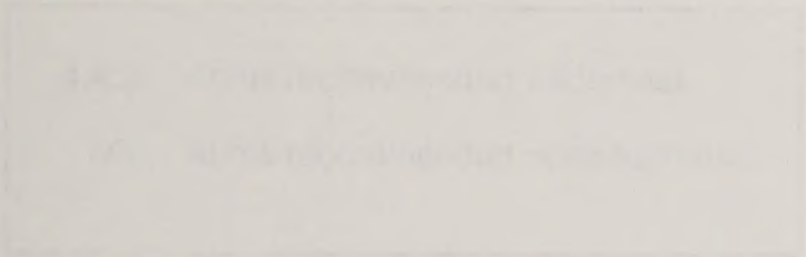
The entire WSA is rated by BLM Geologists as having moderate potential for coal. While exploration and development is not anticipated at this time, coal mining is currently occurring 15 miles north of the WSA. The WSA contains approximately 8,000 acres which have been rated by BLM Geologists as moderate mineral resource potential for uranium. If future economic conditions favor uranium mining, various areas within Eagle Peak could be targets for exploration and development.

The existence of 10,892 acres of State-owned mineral rights in an area believed to have potential for mineral development will limit the ability of the BLM to protect wilderness values in this WSA. The exercise of these rights, through mineral exploration and development, would prevent BLM from managing the Eagle Peak WSA as wilderness in the long-term. These split-estate lands are concentrated in the

center of the WSA, but are also found in scattered sections throughout the WSA. The extent and location of these rights precludes adjusting the boundaries to produce a manageable wilderness area.

Surface ownership patterns include 840 acres of private inholdings (with mineral rights) and 160 acres of State land (with mineral rights). While not as extensive as the subsurface inholdings, these surface inholdings would also create manageability problems. One of the surface inholdings presents a special problem for wilderness management because it contains a large diesel powered water pump. The sound of the diesel motor, when running, can be heard in a wide area around the inholding.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE



The recommended design for this WSA is to designate 8,000 acres as wilderness and to remove the remaining 100 acres for other uses. The area recommended for wilderness designation contains the highest wilderness values of riparianity, solitude, and primitive recreation. The 100 acres is a different management area and is not suitable for wilderness designation.

The recommended alternative is the environmentally preferred alternative as the implementation would result in the least change to the region's environment and resources. The recommended alternative, while not the environmentally preferred, will be implemented

and the recommended design is to be implemented by following specific guidelines and standards. The recommended area contains significant values of riparianity, solitude, and primitive recreation. The area is also a significant habitat for various species of plants and animals. The area is also a significant habitat for various species of plants and animals. The area is also a significant habitat for various species of plants and animals.

The area recommended for wilderness can be managed to preserve the quality of the wilderness. The area is also a significant habitat for various species of plants and animals. The area is also a significant habitat for various species of plants and animals. The area is also a significant habitat for various species of plants and animals.

The conflicts with other resources will be managed by following specific guidelines and standards. The area is also a significant habitat for various species of plants and animals. The area is also a significant habitat for various species of plants and animals. The area is also a significant habitat for various species of plants and animals.

HORSE MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 5,032 Acres

The Horse Mountain Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-020-043, is located in Catron County, approximately 75 air miles west of Socorro, New Mexico. The WSA includes 5,032 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land (see Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area). The WSA is bounded on the west and south by State land and on the north and east by private and State lands.

The WSA is an isolated mountain range with steep, rugged terrain. Elevations range from approximately 2,500 feet at the lower elevations to 9,490 feet atop Horse Peak. The WSA is generally a transition zone from grasslands to pinyon/juniper to ponderosa pine forest at the higher elevations.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

4,432	Acres recommended wilderness
600	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The recommendation for this WSA is to designate 4,432 acres as wilderness and release the remaining 600 acres for uses other than wilderness (see Map 1). The area recommended for wilderness designation contains the highest wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, and primitive recreation. The 600-acre area is of a different character and is not suitable for wilderness designation.

The All Wilderness Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as its implementation would result in the least change to the natural environment over the long-term. The recommendation, while not the environmentally preferred, will be implemented

in a manner which would utilize all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts. The majority of this WSA is recommended as wilderness. In the 600 acres not recommended for wilderness, there are no surface disturbing activities presently proposed. There is a slight possibility of oil and gas exploration impacting up to 5 acres which could slightly change the natural environment of the area.

The lands recommended for designation are characterized by outstanding scenic qualities and diverse wildlife habitat present on Horse Mountain. The recommended area contains significant habitat for mule deer, elk, bear, mountain lions, and raptors. Golden eagles and other raptors nest in the area. Wintering bald eagles have been observed in the Horse Mountain area. Wilderness designation will ensure long-term protection for bears, mountain lions, raptors, and wintering bald eagles known to depend on habitats where there is a low level of human activity.

The area recommended for wilderness can be managed to preserve the quality of the wilderness characteristics. The boundaries are readily identifiable because of the natural change in terrain. A vehicle route forms the southern boundary. The topography and vegetation of the area and the absence of conflicting land uses or private rights would allow the BLM to manage the area to ensure its preservation and use as wilderness in an unimpaired condition.

The conflicts with other resource uses of lands recommended for wilderness designation in this WSA are limited. Grazing use will be allowed to continue and facility maintenance requirements are minimal. There are no new livestock management facilities that would be foregone. The area has been rated by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and U.S. Bureau

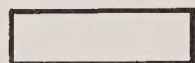
MAP I

T3S

T4S

R13W

R12W



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



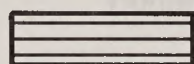
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
(None)



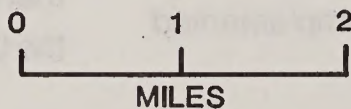
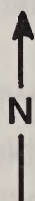
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)



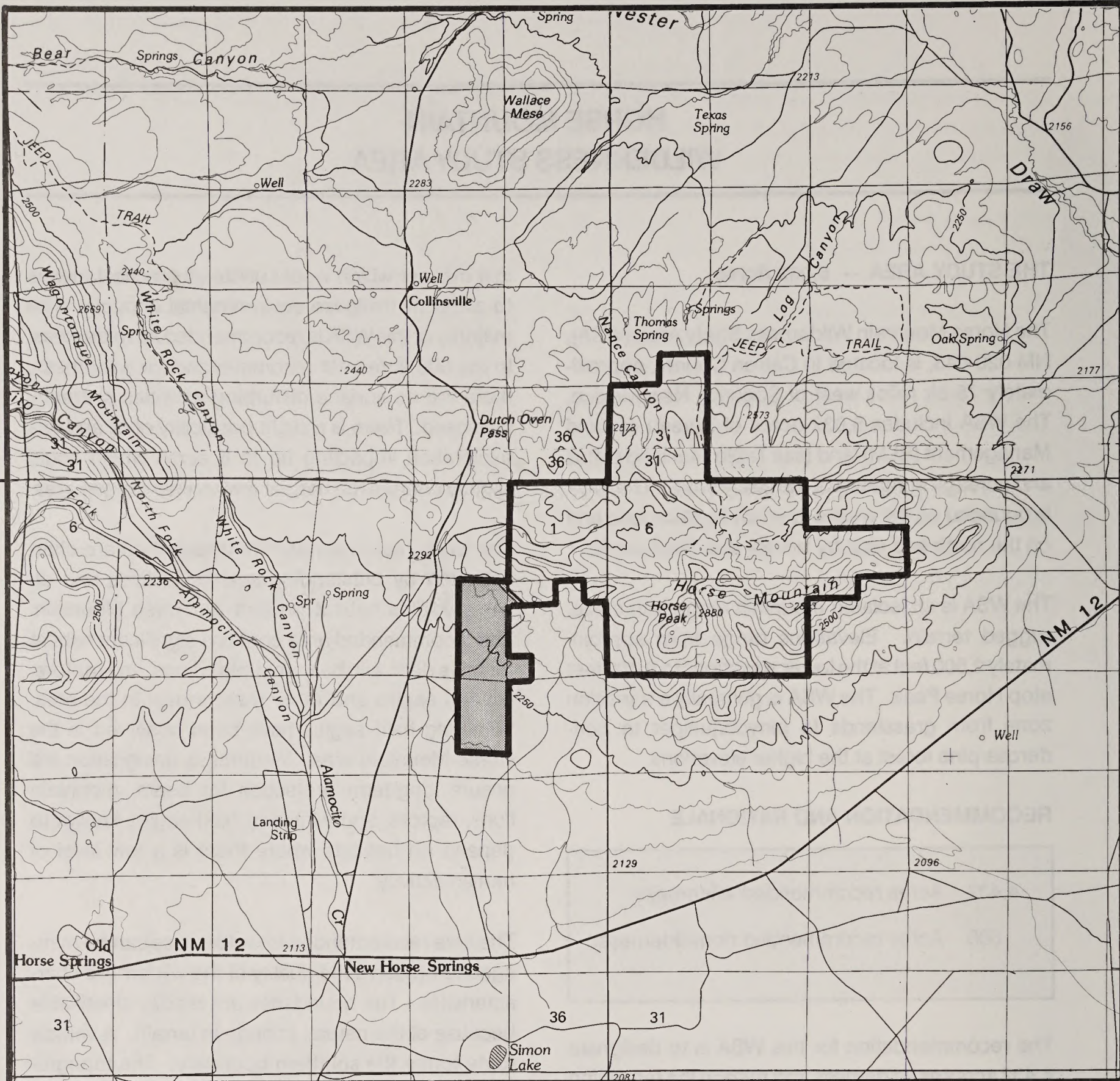
PRIVATE (None)



Horse Mountain Proposal

NM-020-043

April 1990



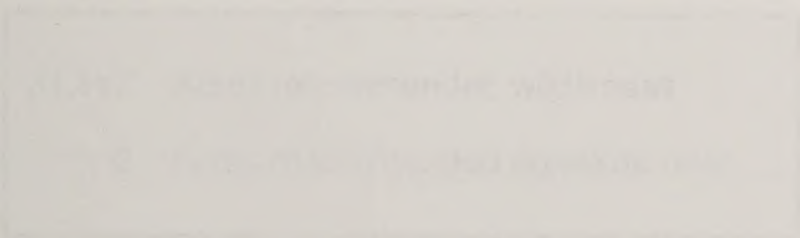
of Mines as having moderate mineral resource potential for oil and gas. No exploration would be foregone in the part of the WSA recommended for wilderness. Exploration is only projected within the 600 acres not recommended for wilderness. A test well was drilled within a half mile of this part of the WSA in 1987, but was dry.

The 600 acres not recommended for wilderness designation are of different physical character and have less wilderness quality than the area recommended for wilderness designation. The 600 acres are open grassland while the majority of the area recommended for wilderness is mountainous, forested terrain. The open grassland area does not provide the same degree of solitude offered by the more diverse vegetation and landform of the area recommended for wilderness particularly in light of

the close proximity of the 600-acre area to the adjacent county road and privately-owned ranch facilities.

A vehicle way used daily for access to the ranch facilities during the grazing season was utilized to form the boundary between the area recommended for wilderness and that recommended for nonwilderness. The recommendation was made to allow for continued unrestricted use of this way that has been the historical access to the ranch facilities. This way forms a recognizable boundary for the wilderness area and is located in the area where the character of the WSA changes from mountainous to flatter open terrain.

RECOMMENDATION FOR WILDERNESS



The recommendation for this WSA is to designate the entire area as wilderness (100%). This recommendation is based on the area's high quality values, scenic, scientific, historic, and recreational values, lack of other resources uses,

The recommended area provides significant habitat for pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, and wild horses. The riparian habitat and riparian vegetation are also present in the area. The riparian habitat includes the following: cottonwood, willow, and shrub. The riparian habitat is also present in the area. The riparian habitat includes the following: cottonwood, willow, and shrub. The riparian habitat is also present in the area. The riparian habitat includes the following: cottonwood, willow, and shrub.

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JORNADA DEL MUERTO WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 31,147 Acres

The Jornada del Muerto (Journey of Death) Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-020-055, is located in Socorro and Sierra Counties, approximately 45 air miles south-southeast of Socorro, New Mexico. The WSA contains 31,147 acres of Bureau of Land Management land. There are 2,560 acres of State land within the WSA boundary. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.)

The northern boundary of the WSA is bordered by a dirt access route, while the western boundary is bordered by private land. A county road generally forms the eastern and southern boundaries of the WSA.

The Jornada del Muerto WSA is comprised almost totally of a lava flow, characterized by lava tubes, sink holes, pressure ridges, and other related volcanic features. Many of these structures have been silted in by fine windblown sand and clay materials. The surface of the WSA varies from deep sand on its fringes to continuously undulating, jagged, and fractured lava rock in the interior. Elevations range from 4,700 feet to 4,900 feet.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

31,147	Acres recommended wilderness
0	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The recommendation for this WSA is to designate the entire area as wilderness (see Map 1). This recommendation is based on the area's high quality wilderness values, special geologic features, wildlife and scientific values, lack of other resources uses,

and ease of wilderness manageability. The recommendation is the environmentally preferable alternative as it will result in the least change to the natural environment over the long-term. This recommendation for wilderness will further apply to any additional inholding acreage acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners.

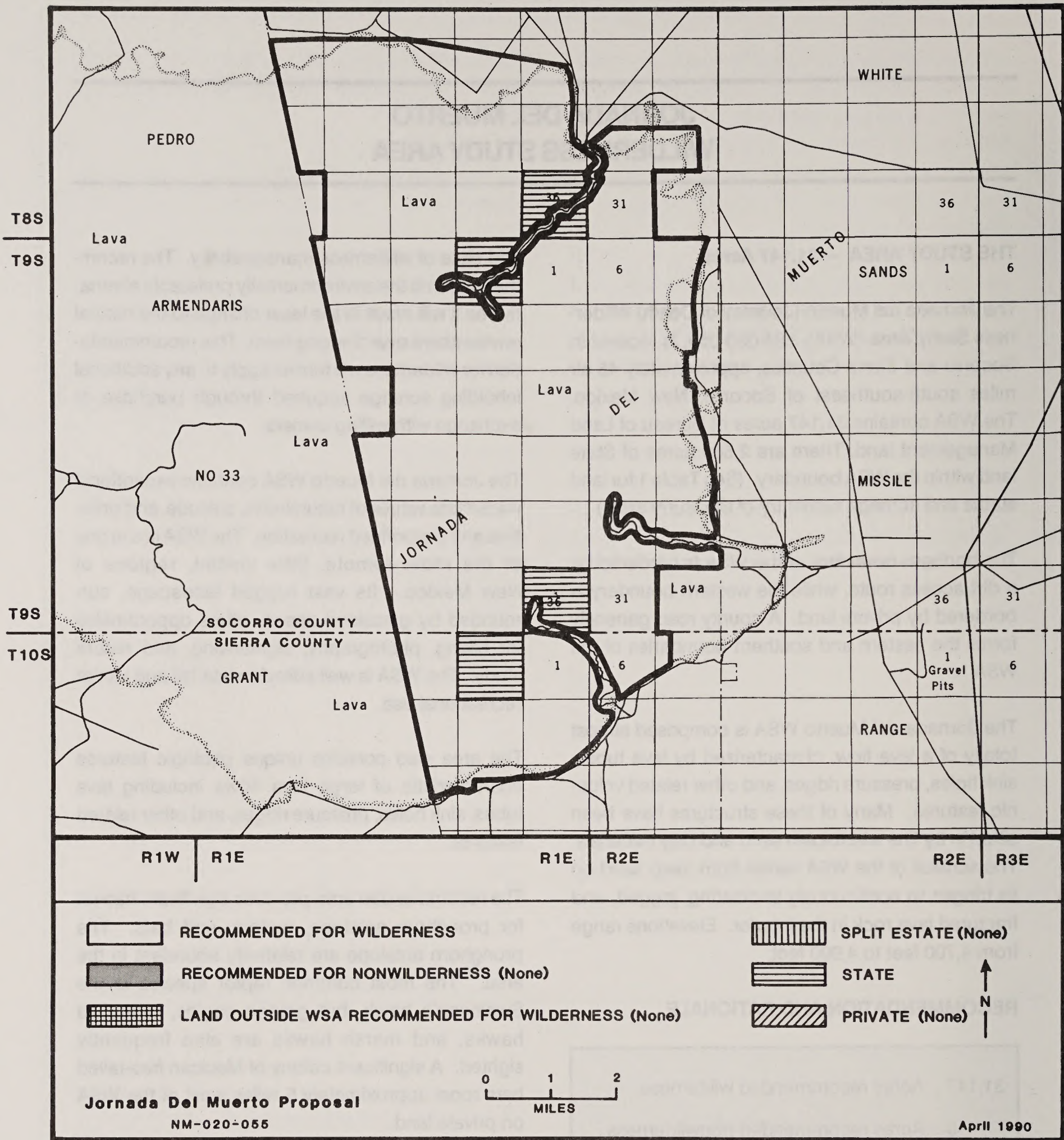
The Jornada del Muerto WSA contains exceptional wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, and primitive and unconfined recreation. The WSA lies in one of the most remote, little visited, regions of New Mexico. Its vast rugged landscape, surrounded by grassland desert, offers opportunities for hiking, photography, sightseeing, and nature study. The WSA is well suited to late fall and winter recreational use.

The area also contains unique geologic features characteristic of large lava flows including lava tubes, sink holes, pressure ridges, and other related features.

The recommended area provides significant habitat for pronghorn antelope, raptors, and bats. The pronghorn antelope are relatively abundant in the area. The most common raptor species is the Swainson's hawk, but golden eagles, red-tailed hawks, and marsh hawks are also frequently sighted. A significant colony of Mexican free-tailed bats roost approximately 5 miles west of the WSA on private land.

A phenomenon peculiar to lava flows is that many animals living on them exhibit melanism or protective dark coloration. A variety of melanistic species of lizards and melanistic western diamond-backed rattlesnakes have been found in the WSA.

MAP 1



The conflicts with other uses of lands recommended for designation within this WSA are limited. Grazing use will be allowed to continue. Facility maintenance requirements are minimal. There are no new livestock management projects proposed.

The WSA was originally rated by BLM Geologists as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of oil and gas. However, this rating has been changed to low by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Bureau of Mines.

The wilderness management potential of the WSA in terms of effectively precluding vehicular access is excellent. Off-road vehicle (ORV) use is limited by the rugged nature of the volcanic landscape. Motorized use could be effectively controlled on the three cherry-stem roads which penetrate the area.

MESITA BLANCA WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 19,414 acres

The Mesita Blanca Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-020-018, is located in western Catron County, approximately 110 air miles northwest of Socorro, New Mexico. The WSA includes 19,414 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands (see Table 1). The WSA is bounded on the north and west by private land and on the south and east by a County road.

The Mesita Blanca WSA is a flat to rolling grassland broken by isolated sandstone and basalt mesas, which are characterized by vertical cliffs and broken topography. The dominant topographic feature and highest point in the WSA is the Red Hill Cinder Cone and its associated 2,000 acre lava flow. Elevations in the WSA range from 6,400 feet to 7,679 feet.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0	Acres recommended wilderness
19,414	Acres Recommended nonwilderness

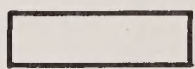
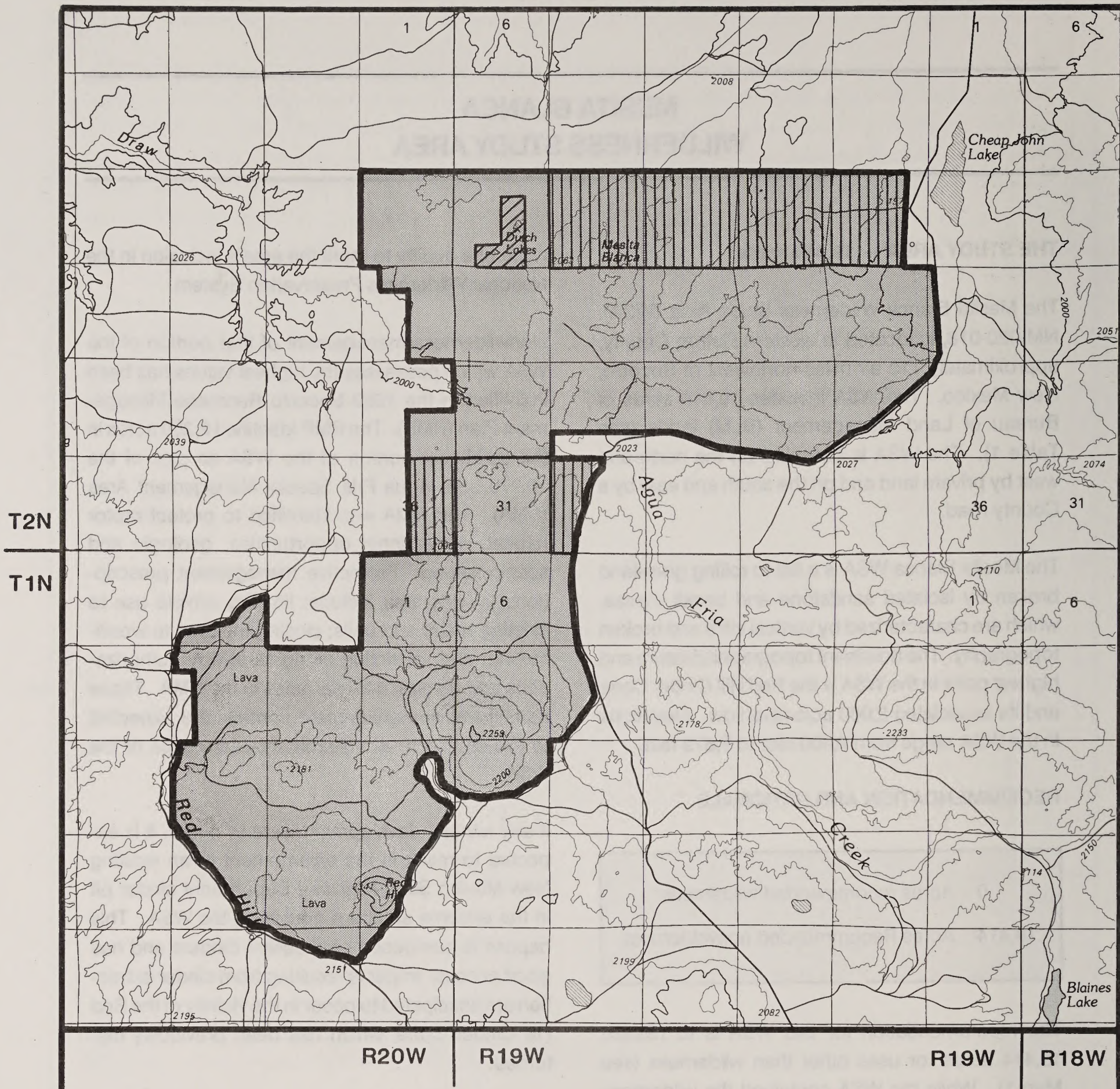
The recommendation for this WSA is to release 19,414 acres for uses other than wilderness (see Map 1). While the WSA contained the wilderness values necessary for study, they are not considered

to be of a quality to merit the area's inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Nonwilderness management of that portion of the WSA which possesses the highest values has been identified in the 1989 Socorro Resource Management Plan (RMP). The RMP identified 2,250 acres in the southeast portion of the WSA as part of the 10,770 acre Agua Fria Special Management Area (SMA). This SMA was identified to protect raptor habitat, recreational opportunities, geologic and scenic values. Protective management prescriptions for this area include: limiting vehicle use to existing roads and trails; closing the area to wood-cutting; and restricting all rights-of-way authorizations and mineral material sales in the SMA. These administrative management controls are expected to protect the most valuable characteristics of the WSA.

If any mineral development were to occur, it is expected to result in the enlargement of an existing New Mexico State Highway Department cinder pit in the extreme southern portion of the WSA. This deposit is composed of excellent cinders and has good access. Impacts resulting from cinder extraction are anticipated to occur in the vicinity of the Red Hill Cinder Cone, which has been previously disturbed.

MAP I



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS (None)



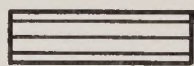
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



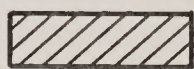
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
(None)



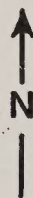
SPLIT ESTATE



STATE (None)

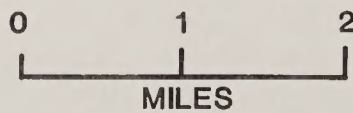


PRIVATE



Mesita Blanca Proposal

NM-020-018



April 1990

The WSA generally appears natural but there are several site-specific signs of man, primarily range-land and watershed developments, which impact naturalness locally. Solitude opportunities available in the WSA are similar to those afforded by thousands of acres of BLM administered land located in west central New Mexico. These solitude opportunities are due to the remoteness and general lack of human activity in this part of New Mexico and are not due to any intrinsic values unique to the WSA.

During the wilderness inventory, the Mesita Blanca WSA was not found to possess outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation because the terrain and vegetation are common throughout the region.

Significant high density cultural sites are located in the northern portion of the WSA. They are considered eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

With the exception of possible cinder extraction, at the present time there is no known threat to the existing naturalness of the area. There are no other projected activities, no known mineral potential, and no valid existing rights in the WSA. Therefore, even without wilderness designation, the quality and level of values now found in the WSA are not expected to significantly change.

The western portion of the WSA provides a wide variety of solitude opportunities. The eastern portion is dominated by mountains and is more rugged, with the greatest solitude and scenic values in the surrounding region. The area is a high plateau, with an average elevation of 6,000 feet.

The western portion of the WSA provides a wide variety of solitude opportunities. The eastern portion is dominated by mountains and is more rugged, with the greatest solitude and scenic values in the surrounding region. The area is a high plateau, with an average elevation of 6,000 feet.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The Mesita Blanca WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. The rationale for the recommendation is based on the quality of the area's wilderness characteristics and the area's potential for solitude and scenic values. The area is a high plateau, with an average elevation of 6,000 feet.

The Mesita Blanca WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. The rationale for the recommendation is based on the quality of the area's wilderness characteristics and the area's potential for solitude and scenic values. The area is a high plateau, with an average elevation of 6,000 feet.

The BLM has designated 2,000 acres in the eastern end of the WSA as the Target Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

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The WSA is a high plateau, with an average elevation of 6,000 feet. The area is a high plateau, with an average elevation of 6,000 feet.

PRESILLA WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 8,680 Acres

The Presilla Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-020-037, is located in Socorro County, approximately 2 miles east of Socorro, New Mexico. The WSA includes 8,680 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The Quebradas Road forms the eastern boundary of the WSA, while private land forms the western boundary. Roads also form the northern and southern boundaries of the WSA.

The western portion of the WSA contains mesa benchlands cut by large arroyos, while the eastern portion is dominated by limestone and sandstone hills, with low granitic ridges rising slightly above the surrounding terrain. Elevation varies from 4,700 feet to 5,450 feet.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0 Acres recommended wilderness

8,680 Acres recommended nonwilderness

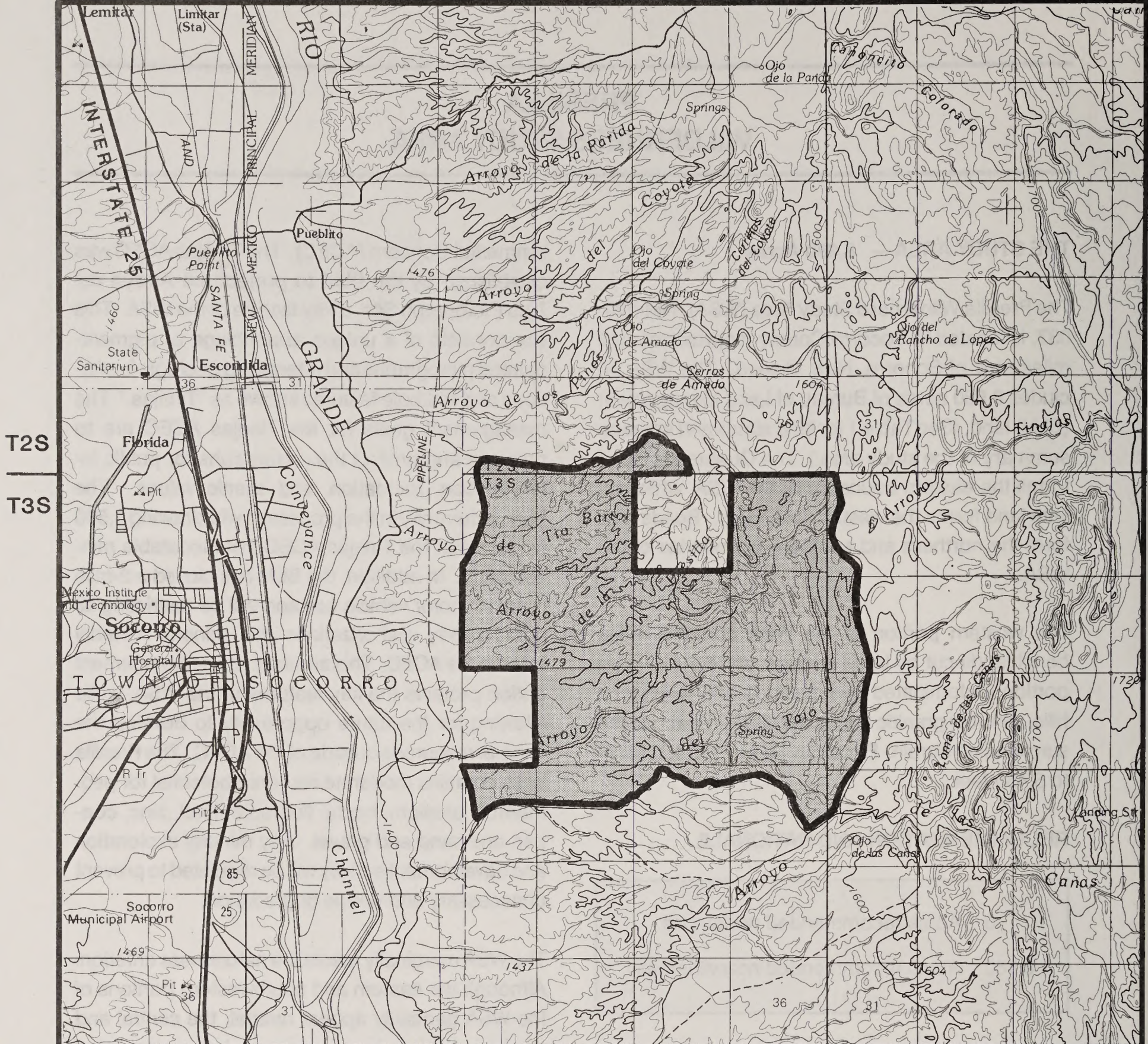
The Presilla WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). The recommendation for the Presilla WSA is based on the quality of the area's wilderness characteristics and the area's moderate mineral resource potential. While the area contains the wilderness values necessary for study, they are not considered to be of a quality to merit inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS).

The BLM has designated 3,500 acres in the eastern half of the WSA as the Tinajas Area of Critical Envi-

ronmental Concern (ACEC). The Tinajas ACEC was established by the BLM to protect the Arroyo del Tajo Pictograph Site, a key feature of the WSA. This site consists of a unique assemblage of pigment-painted pictographs and interesting geologic formations and sinkhole features known as "Tinajas." The management goals for the Tinajas ACEC are to preserve and protect the pictographs for public interpretation, recreation, and scenic values. The BLM is currently in the process of withdrawing 1,500 acres within the Tinajas ACEC from locatable mineral entry. In addition, the BLM has closed a 2-mile route to motor vehicle use and will be restricting all rights-of-way authorizations and mineral material sales in the ACEC. This administrative management option protects the key features of the WSA, while allowing for the future opportunity to develop the mineral resources outside of the ACEC. The Presilla WSA contains moderate resource potential for geothermal, uranium, barite, fluorspar, lead, zinc, copper, and sand and gravel. Any mineral exploration and development activity will be regulated to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation.

The WSA marginally meets the naturalness criterion. Although the eastern and southwestern portions of the WSA generally appear natural, the central and northern portions have been cumulatively impacted by approximately 5 miles of vehicle routes, 10 miles of barbed wire fence, 8 mineral prospecting pits, and 2 mine shafts. The vehicle routes through the area are the most noticeable impact on naturalness. The route along the Arroyo de la Presilla, which trends north-south into the center of the WSA, is evident from several vantage points. The routes are most noticeable where they cross hillsides and the larger arroyos. The cumulative impact of the vehicle routes, prospect pits, and mine shafts reduces the overall quality of naturalness in the WSA. Because of the locations of these impacts, a boundary adjust-

MAP I

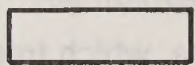


R1W

R1E

R1E

R2E



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS (None)



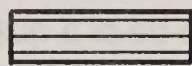
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



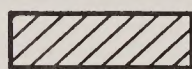
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
(None)



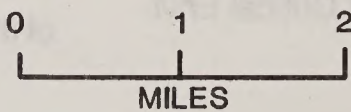
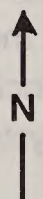
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)



PRIVATE (None)



Presilla Proposal

NM-020-037

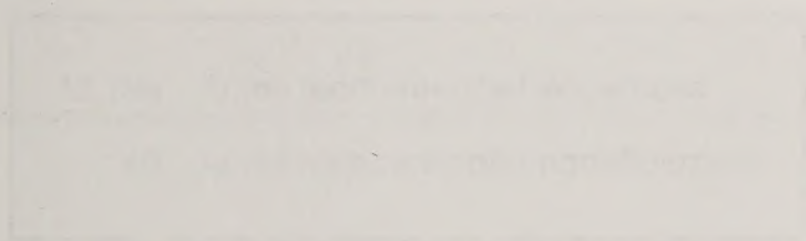
April 1990

ment to eliminate these impacts, while retaining a large enough area which possesses wilderness values, is impossible.

Although outstanding opportunities exist for primitive and unconfined recreation, the area does not possess outstanding opportunities for solitude. In addition, there are better recreation opportunities and outstanding opportunities for solitude available in another nearby area. Immediately east of the

Presilla WSA lies the 12,798-acre Sierra de las Canas WSA. The Sierra de las Canas WSA has been recommended for wilderness designation and provides a more diverse array of primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities as well as outstanding opportunities for solitude. The outstanding opportunities available in the Sierra de las Canas WSA result from the area's high quality desert scenery, wildlife diversity, varied terrain, and vegetation.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE



The recommendation for the Presilla WSA is to designate 12,798 acres as wilderness and release the remainder

The recommendation will not be made for the Presilla WSA. Even though the WSA is only 10 miles from Interstate 25 and the town of Las Alamos, there are few signs of man in the area. While most of the country nearby is covered with fields and orchards, the WSA has very few. The only signs of man are a few small buildings and a few signs of man.

The WSA is a topographically complex desert mountain range characterized by steep vertical escarpments, high ridges, and rugged canyons. The landscape is a mix of desert shrubs and grasses.

SIERRA DE LAS CAÑAS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA – 12,838 Acres

The Sierra de las Cañas Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-020-038, is located in Socorro County in central New Mexico, approximately 7 air miles east of Socorro, New Mexico. The WSA includes 12,838 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area). The northern boundary of the WSA is bounded by private and State lands. The east and west boundaries are bordered by county roads. The southern boundary is bounded by State land and a county road.

The WSA is characterized as a rugged desert mountain range with sheer rock escarpments, deep narrow canyons, mountain ridges, mesa tops, broken badlands, and isolated desert valleys. Elevations range from 5,100 to 6,200 feet. Several large drainages present within the WSA trend northeast to southwest, affording scenic views of the Rio Grande Valley.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

12,798	Acres recommended wilderness
40	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The recommendation for this WSA is to designate 12,798 acres as wilderness and release the remain-

ing 40 acres for uses other than wilderness (see Map 1). This recommendation is based on the area's high quality wilderness values, its easy accessibility for primitive and unconfined recreational uses, the lack of conflicts with other actual or potential uses of the area, and well defined boundaries which will aide in wilderness management. The area not designated wilderness would allow access to a private inholding.

The majority of this WSA is recommended as wilderness. Surface disturbing activities projected for the 40 acres not recommended for wilderness include an anticipated access route to a 160-acre private inholding within the WSA. While reasonable access must be provided to the private inholding, road design considerations, intended to minimize visual impacts, would be incorporated prior to development.

The recommendation will add an area with extremely high natural values. Even though the WSA is only 10 miles from Interstate 25 and the town of Socorro, there are few signs of man in the area. While most of the country nearby is covered with roads and vehicle routes, this WSA has very few. The rugged character and lack of water have caused only light grazing and few grazing developments.

The WSA is a topographically serrated desert mountain range characterized by near vertical escarpments, steep slopes, and rugged canyons. The flanks of the mountains include broken badlands,

MAP I

T2S

T3S

T3S

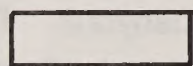
T4S

R1E

R2E

R2E

R3E



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



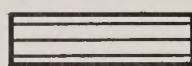
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
(None)



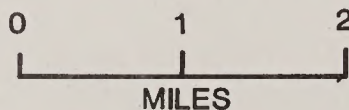
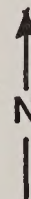
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)



PRIVATE



Sierra De Las Cañas Proposal

NM-020-035

April 1990

arroyos, and desert. The topographic diversity coupled with the severity of much of the WSA's landforms ensure outstanding solitude opportunities of the highest quality.

Wilderness designation will preserve an undisturbed area of ecological interest. The WSA occurs in an area where the Upper Chihuahuan Desert Province merges with the Colorado Plateau Province creating an area with diverse vegetation consisting of desert shrub, creosote bush, and pinyon-juniper. This merging of two ecosystems could provide an educational opportunity.

The area recommended for wilderness would expand the spectrum of primitive recreational opportunities for residents of the region and permanently preserve the scenic values of a desert mountain range visible from much of the Middle Rio Grande Valley and Socorro. Wilderness designation will provide primitive recreation opportunities in an area both visible and accessible from Interstate 25. The WSA rises above the Rio Grande Valley, and the WSA's broken and convoluted western escarpment often provides a display of variegated, banded colors during the late daylight hours. Popular recreation activities include sightseeing, photography, deer hunting, horseback riding, and hiking.

Within the recommended area, the rugged Loma de las Cañas ridgeline and adjoining side canyons include rough terrain which has acted as a natural barrier, precluding access except in open washes.

Rugged terrain and recognizable boundaries would enhance manageability of the area as wilderness.

The conflicts with other resource uses of lands recommended for designation are limited. Grazing use will be allowed to continue, but maintenance requirements are few and no new projects would be foregone. The area has been rated as having low resource potential for undiscovered uranium and other metals, oil and gas, coal and geothermal energy. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Bureau of Mines rated the WSA as having a high potential for the occurrence of gypsum, but stated the economic value of the deposit was insignificant in light of other gypsum deposits in New Mexico. No development of these resources are projected in the foreseeable future.

The 40 acres of BLM land recommended as non-wilderness is located on the northeastern edge of the WSA immediately adjacent to a 160-acre private inholding. The private landowner has indicated a need to develop an access road to his private land. The most reasonable location to construct this road is through this 40-acre parcel of BLM land. Excluding the 40-acre BLM parcel will create new wilderness boundaries that also exclude the 160-acre private inholding. This action would enhance management of the area by eliminating the conflict with developing access to the private land.

SIERRA LADRONES WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 45,308 Acres

The Sierra Ladrones Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-020-016, is located in northern Socorro County, approximately 15 air miles northwest of Socorro, New Mexico. The WSA includes 43,770 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, 1,538 acres of split-estate (Federal surface, non-Federal subsurface), 2,485 acres of State land, and 645 acres of private inholdings. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The WSA is bounded on the north by private and BLM lands and on the west and south by roads. The eastern border of the WSA is formed by the adjacent Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge.

The Sierra Ladrones rise precipitously out of the Rio Grande Valley on the east and from mesa grassland and pinyon-juniper woodland on the north, west, and south. Elevations range from 5,200 to 9,176 feet, with a maximum relief of almost 4,000 feet.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

31,804	Acres recommended wilderness
13,504	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The recommendation for this WSA is to designate 31,804 acres as wilderness and release the remaining 13,504 acres for nonwilderness uses (see Map 1). This recommendation is based on the fact that the land in the northern and eastern portions of the WSA contain high quality wilderness values. The area not recommended for wilderness contains unrecognizable boundaries; manageability problems due to private and State inholdings and split-estate land; rangeland improvements requiring

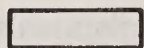
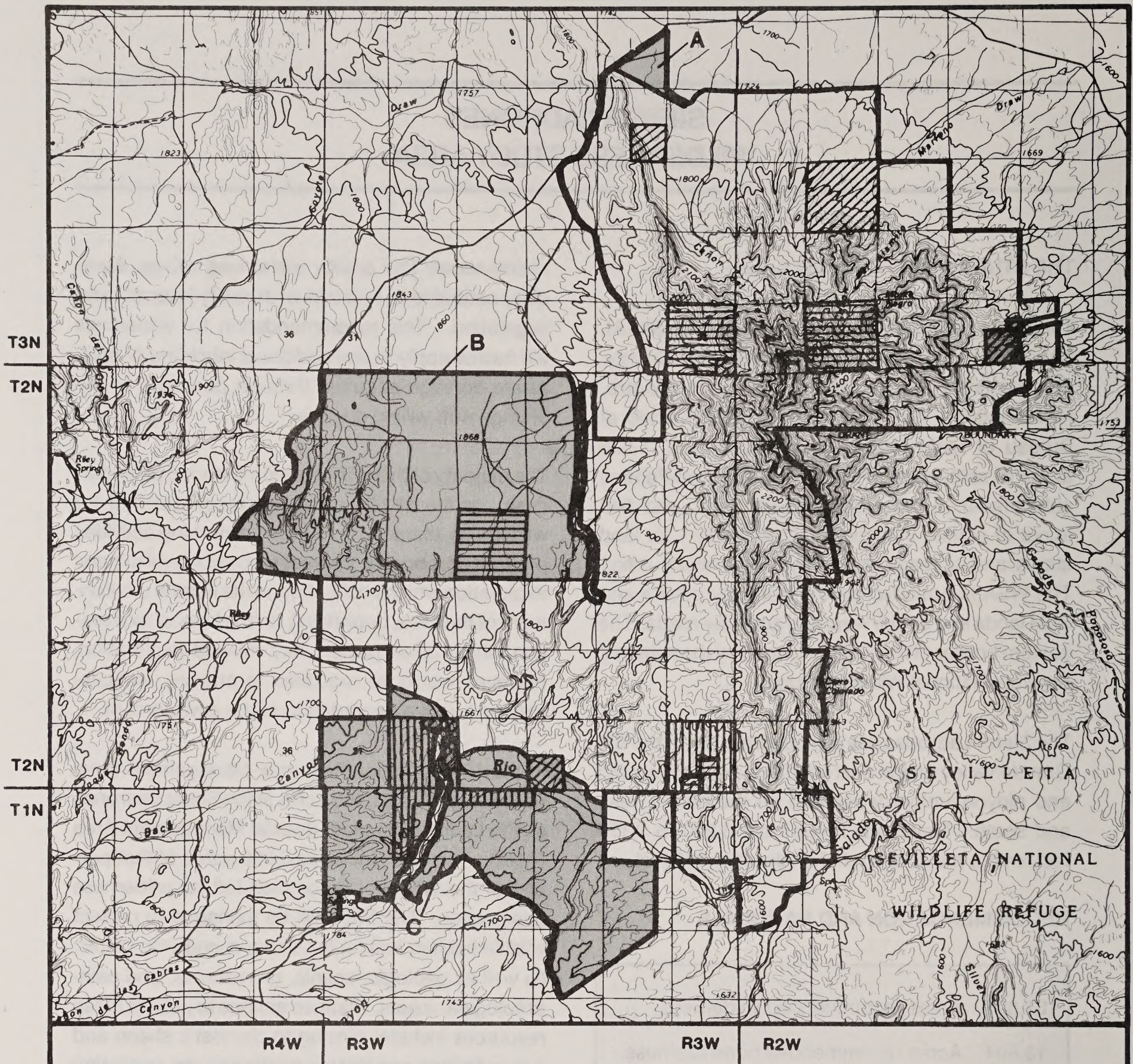
maintenance; low quality wilderness values, especially naturalness; and lack of diversity in terrain and vegetation. This recommendation for wilderness will further apply to any additional inholding or split-estate acreage acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners.

The majority of this WSA is recommended as wilderness. In the 13,504 acres not recommended for wilderness, there are no surface-disturbing activities presently proposed. There is a possibility of mineral exploration which could change the natural environment of the area, depending on the level of exploration which takes place. Any mineral exploration, however, would be regulated to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation of the environment.

In the 1989 Socorro Resource Management Plan, BLM designated 62,460 acres in the Sierra Ladrones as the Ladron Mountain Special Management Area (SMA). This SMA includes 8,300 acres of that portion of the WSA not recommended for wilderness designation. The SMA will be managed to protect wildlife habitat, habitat for rare and endemic plants, as well as geologic, scenic, recreational, and paleontological values. Planned actions to protect these resources include: closing to domestic sheep and goats; limiting and closing existing roads; restricting authorizations for rights-of-way; closing the area to wood cutting; restricting mineral material disposals; acquiring non-Federal lands; restricting geophysical operations; and reintroducing desert bighorn sheep.

The recommended area has high wilderness values. The rugged topography is essentially natural; intrusions in canyons, such as access routes, are generally well-screened. Its high mountain peaks, isolated canyons, and inaccessible badlands provide the visitor with outstanding solitude opportuni-

MAP 1



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS



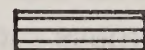
RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS



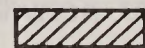
LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None)



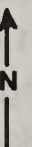
SPLIT ESTATE



STATE



PRIVATE



Sierra Ladrone Proposal

NM-020-016

April 1990

ties. The area's landscape diversity provides visitors with outstanding primitive recreational opportunities. The proximity and ease of access of the WSA to nearby population centers further enhance the value of these opportunities to the general public.

The WSA is dominated by the granitic core of the Sierra Ladrones. The dramatic uplift of the mountain range, especially when viewed from the north, is inherently scenic. The panoramic view from the top of Ladrone Mountain is spectacular. The WSA is visible from a distance of nearly 100 miles in some directions. The Sierra Ladrones stand as one of New Mexico's outstanding visual landmarks.

The recommended area contains significant geologic features including fossils which are not found elsewhere in New Mexico.

The ecological values of the WSA are also high. The WSA lies near the junction of two major ecoregions and includes such a wide range of landform and life zone diversity that the ecological resources of the area can be considered scientifically valuable. The area also contains potential for occurrence of one Federally-listed and four State-listed species of endangered plants.

The massive rock escarpments, canyons, and outcrops are attractive to birds of prey. The area is potentially suitable for the reintroduction of desert bighorn sheep, a State-listed endangered species. The rocky slopes also provide significant habitat for mule deer, cougar, bobcat, and gray fox.

The area recommended for wilderness can be managed to preserve the quality of the wilderness characteristics. The boundaries are readily identifiable because of the natural change in terrain. The topog-

raphy and absence of conflicting land uses or private rights within the recommended area would allow the BLM to manage the area to ensure its preservation and use as wilderness in an unimpaired condition.

The conflicts with other resource uses of lands recommended for wilderness designation are primarily with minerals. Although the Sierra Ladrones WSA possesses moderate to high mineral resource potential, little exploration or development has taken place in or near the area recently. The high quality wilderness values in the recommended area outweigh the potential mineral values previously described.

The 13,504 acres not recommended for wilderness designation are of different physical character and have less wilderness quality than the area recommended for wilderness designation. Although they can be managed as wilderness, other factors exist which support a nonwilderness designation. These 13,504 acres comprise three separate parcels identified as A, B, and C. All these areas are open mesa grasslands and foothills, while the majority of the area recommended for wilderness is mountainous terrain. These open areas do not provide the same degree of wilderness values offered by the more diverse landform of the area recommended for wilderness.

Parcel A (150 acres), in the northern portion of the WSA, is not recommended for wilderness designation in order to enhance manageability by establishing a more identifiable wilderness boundary utilizing a natural change in terrain.

Parcel B (8,300 acres), in the western portion of the WSA, is not recommended for wilderness because it has been heavily impacted by rangeland develop-

ments and access routes. It contains a 640-acre inholding of State land. This parcel also lacks diversity in terrain and vegetation, and does not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation.

Parcel C (5,054 acres), in the southern portion of the WSA, is not recommended for wilderness because

it possesses low quality naturalness due to range-land developments associated primarily with a Savory Grazing System. This parcel also contains two private inholdings totaling 325 acres and split-estate land which intensify manageability problems.

STALLION WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 24,238 Acres

The Stallion Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-020-040, is located in central Socorro County, 14 miles east of Socorro, New Mexico. The WSA includes 24,238 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and 1,280 acres of State inholdings. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The WSA is bounded on the west and east by County roads and on the north and south by maintained dirt roads and BLM-administered public lands.

The Stallion WSA is characterized by a semi-arid mountainous environment which varies from the near vertical rock escarpments and eroded plains of the Sierra Larga to rolling pinyon-juniper and grass covered hills. Elevations in the WSA range from 5,500 feet to 7,100 feet.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0 Acres recommended wilderness
24,238 Acres recommended wilderness

The Stallion WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). While the area contains the values necessary for study, they are not considered to be of a quality to merit inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). Based on the numerous vehicle routes in the WSA and the overlapping White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) Safety Extension Area, the BLM believes the area would be difficult and costly to manage as wilderness. Wilderness designation would also conflict with possible future mineral development.

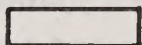
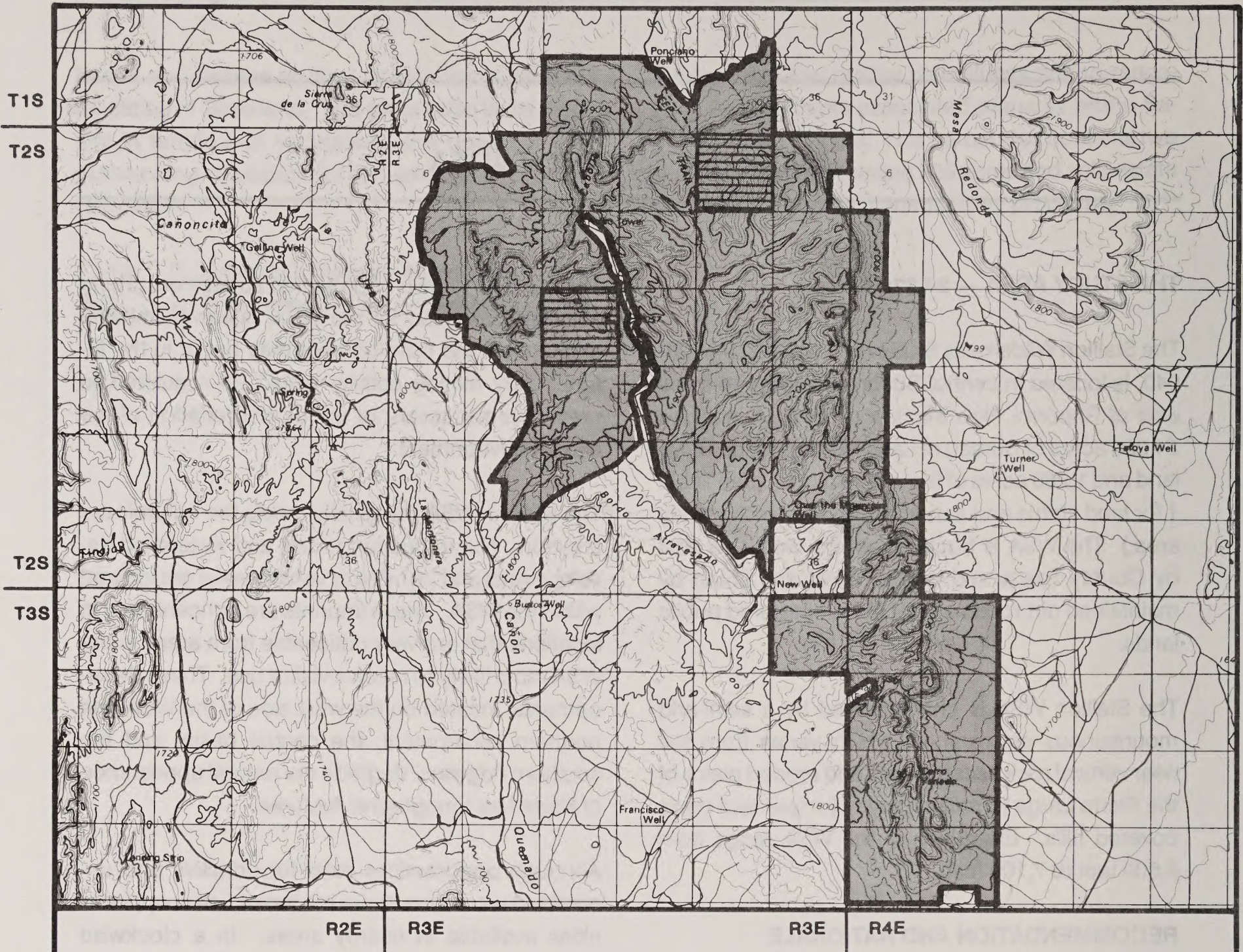
There are no known or projected surface disturbing activities proposed for the WSA, however, mineral exploration and development may occur in the future. Any mining activity would be regulated to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the natural environment.

The Stallion WSA marginally meets the naturalness criterion. Numerous rangeland and watershed developments and 20 miles of vehicle ways are located within the WSA. These imprints are concentrated in locations that are very noticeable from areas in the WSA most likely to receive visitor use. These developments, located on the west side of the WSA, the northern escarpment, the central basin, and the southern ridgeline, degrade the natural appearance of these key topographic features.

Although opportunities exist for primitive and unconfined recreation, there are much better opportunities available in nearby areas. In a clockwise direction, the Manzano, San Pascual, and Withington Wilderness Areas are all within a 50-mile radius of the Stallion WSA. These areas total 86,920 acres. These wilderness areas, located within a 1-hour drive from Socorro, provide much greater recreational opportunities in a more natural, primitive setting.

The area could be managed as wilderness, however, manageability would be costly and require a high level of patrolling due to the frequent motor vehicle use of the 20 miles of vehicle ways and 4 miles of cherry-stem roads which penetrate the WSA. These ways have historically been heavily used by deer hunters and would be virtually impossible to physically close due to their location in open terrain. Administrative costs to sign and patrol the area would be significant.

MAP 1



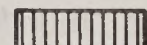
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None)



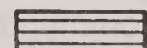
RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS



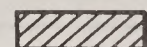
LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None)



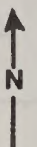
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE



PRIVATE (None)



Stallion Proposal
NM-020-040

April 1990

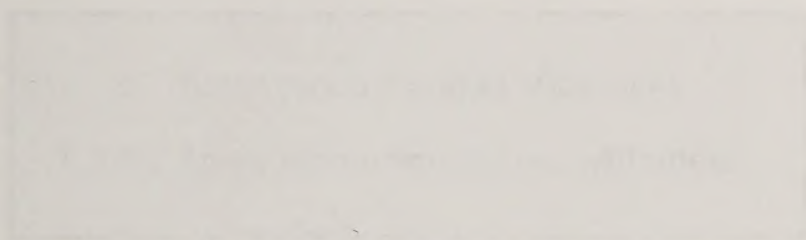
The presence of the WSA within the WSMR Safety Extension Area would require special management consideration to accommodate the military's needs while preserving wilderness values and ensuring human safety. A permit system and appropriate signing would be required if the area were designated wilderness. This would facilitate WSMR's periodic evacuations of the area but would increase wilderness management costs. Access to recover possible missile debris would be granted after determining the method which would least impact wilderness values. While this is not expected to result in significant problems because of the low probability of a missile impacting in the area, personnel from the WSMR have stated that future test forecasts indicate increased utilization of the area.

Copper deposits in Permian red beds are known to occur in a belt extending from Scholle to Carthage passing through the WSA. Some of the deposits were mined in the past but have been uneconomic

in recent years. The red beds crop out extensively in the WSA. For this reason, the WSA is considered to have moderate potential for the occurrence of copper mineralization. Indications of mineral exploration occur in the western and southern portions of the WSA as evidenced by the numerous prospect pits.

Stream sediment samples from the National Uranium Resource Evaluation (NURE) study showed anomalously high concentrations of rare-earth elements in two samples from the northeastern part of the WSA and in several samples just outside the WSA boundaries. The resource potential for rare-earth elements, specifically, lanthanum, cerium, samarium, and ytterbium, is considered in the NURE study as high in the northeast part of the study area.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE



The Vermilion WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see page 11). While the area contains some outstanding natural resources, the area is too small to be considered for wilderness designation. The area is also too small to be considered for wilderness designation.

While resource development activities within the WSA are not expected, there is a possibility for groundwater exploration. A exploration well is

During the wilderness evaluation, it was determined that the WSA lacked outstanding recreational opportunities.

There are no known special features or wildlife species in the area that would qualify for wilderness designation. Other BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness and pending U.S. Forest Service U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wilderness areas are considered to be more appropriate. These areas are located in the northern portion of the Vermilion WSA.

VERANITO WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 7,206 Acres

The Veranito Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-020-035, is located in central Socorro County, 4 miles north-northeast of Socorro, New Mexico. The WSA includes 7,206 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The WSA is bounded by a powerline and private land on the south and west, by a County road on the east, and by State land on the north.

The WSA is dominated by mesa benchlands which have been cut by numerous arroyos. The drainages are not large, with arroyo depths ranging from 20 to 200 feet. The arroyos generally run northeast to southwest and terminate in the Rio Grande floodplain. A series of low-lying hills are on the east side of the WSA, with the Rio Grande floodplain on the northwest side. Elevations range from 4,600 feet to 5,400 feet.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0 Acres recommended wilderness
7,206 Acres recommended nonwilderness

The Veranito WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). While the area contains the wilderness values necessary for study, they are not considered to be of a quality to merit inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS).

While resource development activities within the WSA are not projected, there is a possibility for geothermal exploration. If exploration were to

occur, it is possible that up to 5 miles of new roads would be constructed and approximately 50 test holes would be drilled. Any exploration activity would, however, be regulated to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation of the area's resources.

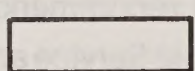
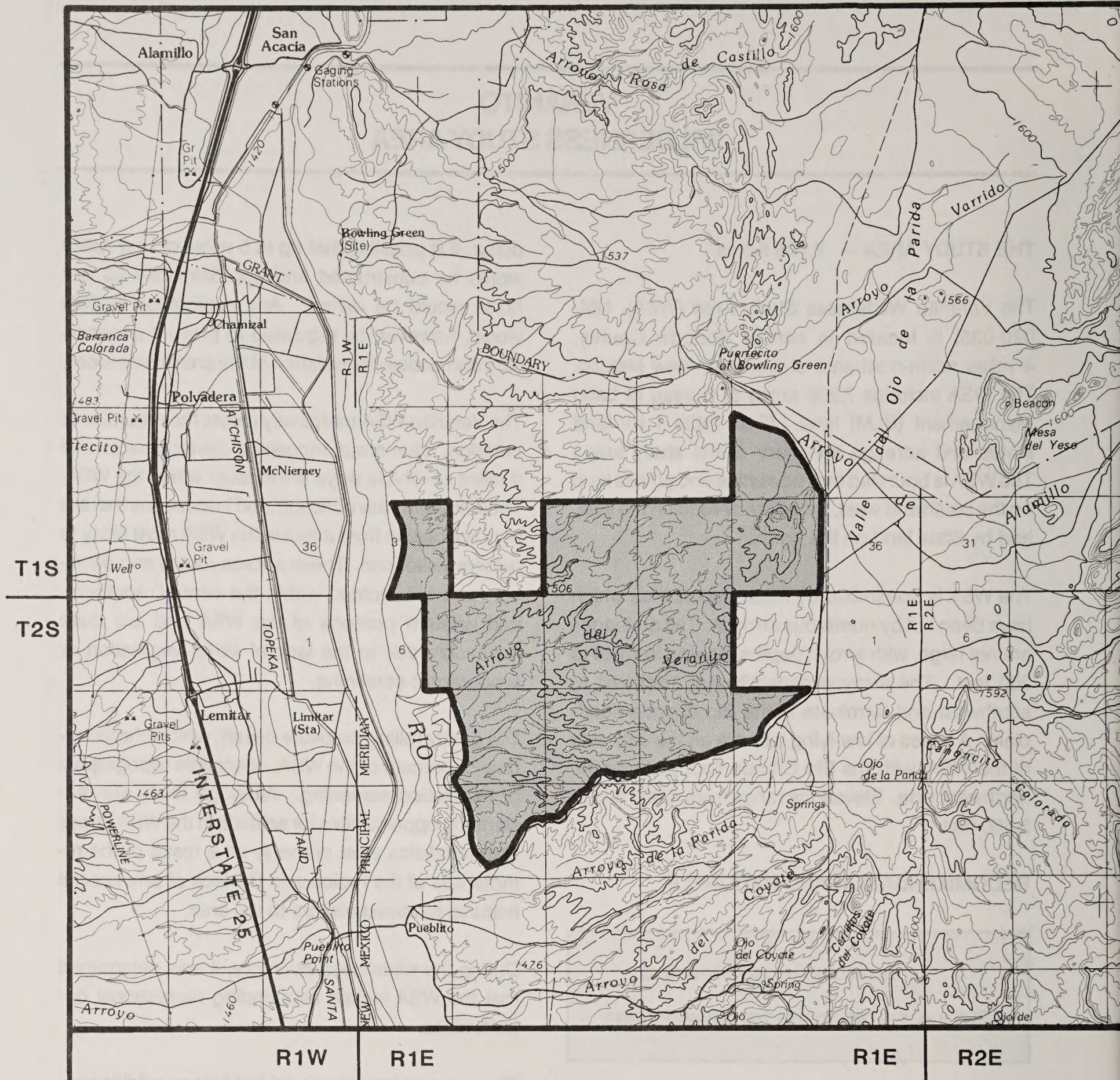
The Veranito WSA marginally meets the naturalness criterion. Numerous rangeland developments and 6 miles of vehicle ways are located within the WSA. These imprints are concentrated in locations that are very noticeable from areas in the WSA most likely to receive visitor use. These access routes and developments are located within the central, southern, and western portions of the WSA and are quite noticeable due to the lack of either vegetation or topographic screening.

The gently rolling creosote desert, which characterizes 75 percent of the WSA, offers little topographic or vegetation screening. Although there are outstanding opportunities for solitude in the WSA, these characteristics exist primarily as a result of the remoteness of the region and the lack of any special features to attract visitors to the area.

During the wilderness inventory, it was determined that the WSA lacked outstanding recreational opportunities.

There are no known special habitats or wildlife species in the WSA that would depend upon wilderness designation. Other BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness and existing U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wilderness areas are common in the region. These nearby areas possess much greater wilderness values than the Veranito WSA.

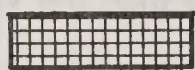
MAP I



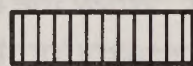
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS (None)



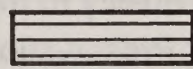
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
(None)



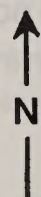
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



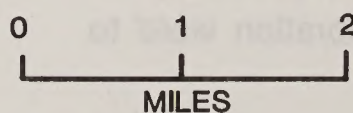
STATE (None)



PRIVATE (None)



N



Veranito Proposal

NM-020-035

April 1990

ADEN LAVA FLOW WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 25,287 Acres

The Aden Lava Flow Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-030-053, is located in the southwest quarter of Dona Ana County, 21 miles southwest of Las Cruces, New Mexico. The WSA contains 25,287 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land including 1,430 acres of split-estate and 1,280 acres of State inholdings. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The WSA is bounded by County Roads B02 and BO19 on the northeast and the east sides. Private and State lands abut the WSA on the east and north side. The remainder of the WSA is bounded primarily by BLM land with boundaries being formed by ranch roads and the edge of the lava flow.

The majority of the WSA (about 77 percent) is covered by the Aden Lava Flow. The lava flow is nearly flat with average elevations ranging from 4,225 feet to 4,300 feet. The interior relief of the flow is extremely varied. Steep-walled depressions in the lava occur in varying slopes and sizes up to 100 feet in diameter and 40-50 feet deep. Crevices up to 5 feet wide and 20-30 feet deep are numerous. Other structures within the flow include pressure ridges and lava tubes. The Aden Crater and Afton volcanoes are the most prominent topographic features in the lava flow.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

25,287 Acres recommended wilderness

0 Acres recommended nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Aden Lava Flow WSA is to designate the entire area as wilderness (see

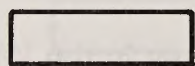
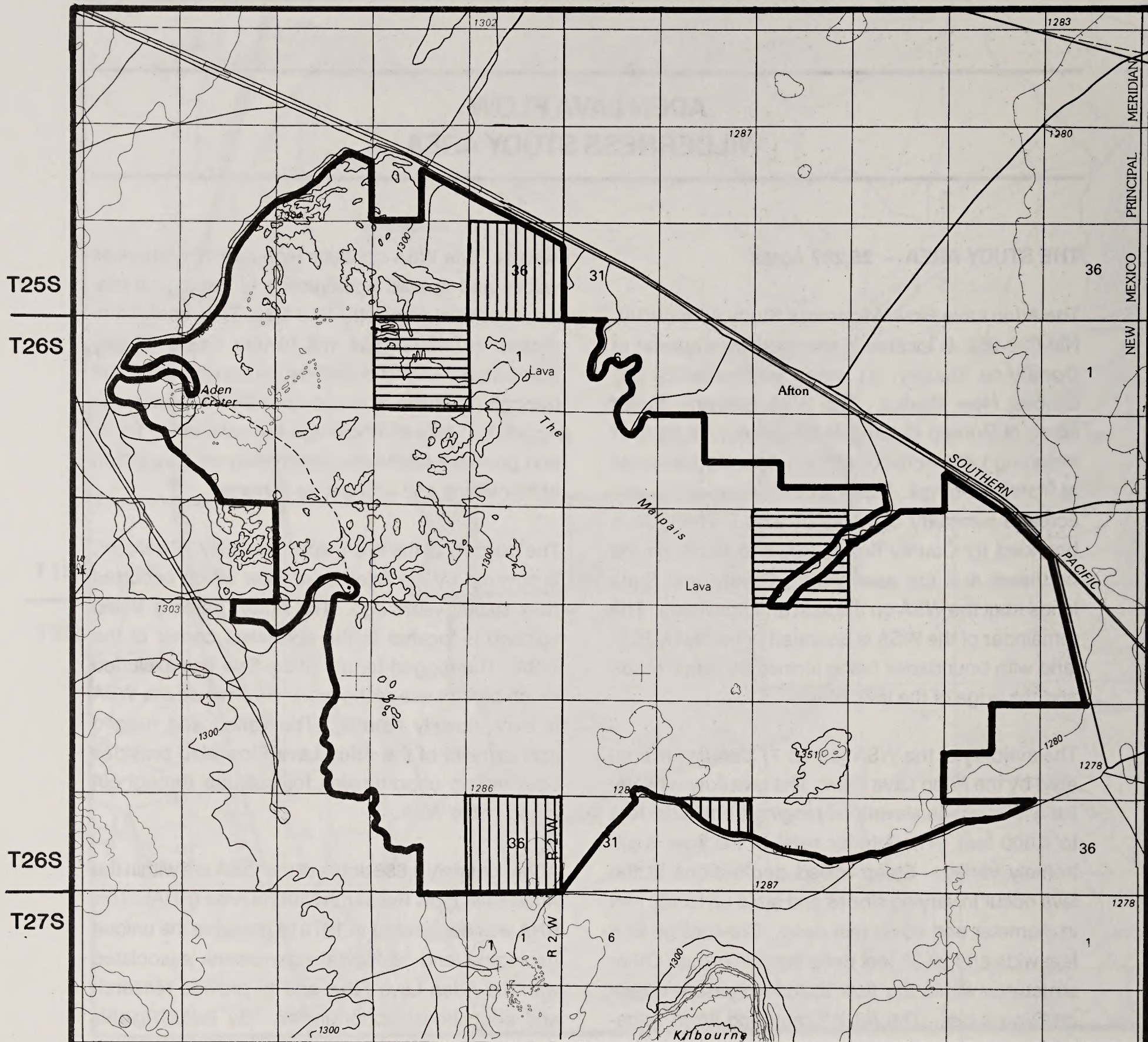
Map 1). The WSA contains high-quality wilderness values and special ecological and geological features associated with the lava flow. This recommendation for wilderness will further apply to any additional inholding or split-estate acreage acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners. Appendix 1 lists all inholdings and split-estate tracts and provides additional information on acquisition of inholdings and split-estate minerals.

The majority of the WSA, approximately 77 percent, is covered by the Aden Lava Flow which occurred over 10,000 years ago. The Aden Crater, a shield volcano is located in the northwest corner of the WSA. The rugged terrain of the flow has excluded much human use of the area. As a result, the WSA is exceptionally natural. The varied and rugged interior relief of the Aden Lava Flow also provides outstanding opportunities for solitude throughout much of the WSA.

Approximately 3,688 acres of the WSA are within the Aden Lava Flow Research Natural Area (RNA). This RNA was designated in 1978 to preserve the unique geological and biological phenomena associated with the Aden Lava Flow and to provide research and educational opportunities. By including this portion of the RNA in wilderness, the special geological, biological, and educational values will clearly enhance the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The conflicts with other resource uses in the WSA are limited. Livestock grazing will be allowed to continue. Along the east side of the WSA, 1,200 acres have high potential and 2,300 acres have moderate potential for decorative building stone in the form of slab lava rock. However, because there are abundant sources of this material in the

MAP I



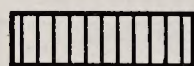
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



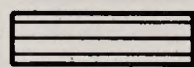
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS (None)



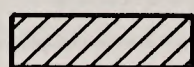
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
(None)



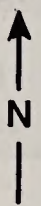
SPLIT ESTATE



STATE



PRIVATE (None)



Aden Lava Flow Proposal

NM-030-053

April 1990

vicinity of the WSA no economic impacts would occur from wilderness designation.

The nature of the lava flow contributes significantly to the management of the area as wilderness. The lava flow defines the boundary of much of the WSA,

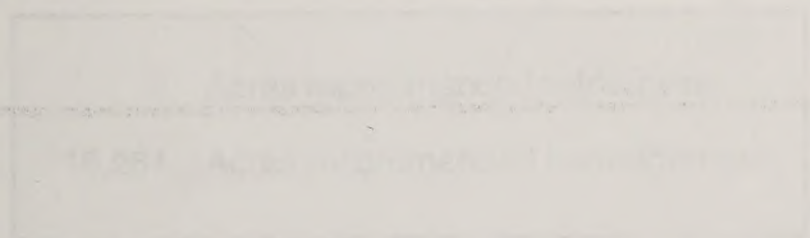
it virtually eliminates any problems with vehicle use, and it physically restricts livestock use and associated maintenance activities to a small part of the WSA.

THE STUDY AREA - ALAMO HUECO

The Alamo Hueco Mountains National Monument (N.M.) is located in the "Four Corners" area of New Mexico, approximately 70 miles southwest of Gallup, New Mexico. The N.M. covers an area of 1,200 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. The area is a high-altitude desert, with a mix of shrubs and grasses. The lava flow is a prominent feature of the area, and it is the primary reason for the WSA. The lava flow is a result of a volcanic eruption that occurred about 10,000 years ago. The lava flow is a dark, basaltic flow that is about 100 feet high. The lava flow is a significant feature of the area, and it is the primary reason for the WSA.

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RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE



The Alamo Hueco Mountains National Monument (N.M.) is located in the "Four Corners" area of New Mexico, approximately 70 miles southwest of Gallup, New Mexico. The N.M. covers an area of 1,200 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. The area is a high-altitude desert, with a mix of shrubs and grasses. The lava flow is a prominent feature of the area, and it is the primary reason for the WSA. The lava flow is a result of a volcanic eruption that occurred about 10,000 years ago. The lava flow is a dark, basaltic flow that is about 100 feet high. The lava flow is a significant feature of the area, and it is the primary reason for the WSA.

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ALAMO HUECO MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 16,264 Acres

The Alamo Hueco Mountains Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-030-038, is located in southeastern Hidalgo County in the "bootheel" of New Mexico, approximately 70 miles south-southeast of Lordsburg, New Mexico. The WSA contains 13,654 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, 2,610 acres of split-estate holdings, 640 acres of State land, and 240 acres of private inholdings. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The northern boundary of the WSA is formed by a maintained dirt road. The remainder of the WSA is bounded almost entirely by private land.

The WSA contains most of the Alamo Hueco Mountains. The mountains are highly eroded volcanics characterized by mesas and vertical cliffs with long, sinuous canyons. Elevations range from about 4,800 feet on the pediment slopes to 6,838 feet on the unnamed peak at the head of Black Canyon. Vegetation consists of grasses, mixed desert shrubs, scattered juniper, and oak brush.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0	Acres recommended wilderness
16,264	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The Alamo Hueco Mountains WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). The recommendation for the WSA is based on the land status pattern in and around the WSA, including the

presence of 2,610 acres of split-estate holdings. The boundary around the southern two-thirds of the WSA is very convoluted with many "fingers" of BLM land surrounded by private land.

The WSA offers outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, however, the convoluted land pattern prevents visitors from fully experiencing these opportunities without trespassing on private land. In addition, because there is no legal access, recreational users are not ensured access to the area. The current leaseholder of the surrounding private land does not readily allow public access to the area.

Even though wilderness recreation values cannot be fully utilized, the lack of legal access provides security for wildlife and maintenance of natural values. The lack of mineral values in the area also tends to eliminate any threats from mineral development. As a result, it is expected that even though the area is not designated wilderness, the natural environment of the area will not change significantly.

In October 1986, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF), in cooperation with BLM, reintroduced desert bighorn sheep into the Alamo Hueco Mountains. By not designating the area as wilderness, the NMDGF will be able to intensively manage the bighorn herd. Likewise, BLM will be able to prescribe burn selected areas and develop water sources to improve the bighorn sheep habitat without the constraints of wilderness management.

MAP I

T32S

T33S

T33S

T34S

R16W

R15W

R15W

R14W



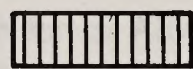
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS (None)



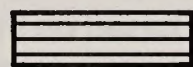
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



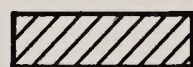
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
(None)



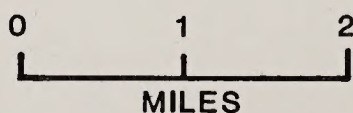
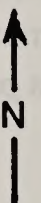
SPLIT ESTATE



STATE



PRIVATE



Alamo Hueco Mountains Proposal

NM-030-038

April 1990

Because of the problems associated with land status in the Alamo Hueco Mountains, wilderness designation would have to be contingent upon acquiring substantial amounts of private land in the area. At the present time, BLM feels it cannot recommend wilderness designation for the WSA without acquiring much of the private land in the Alamo Hueco Mountains.

There is no question the Alamo Hueco Mountains WSA has outstanding wilderness values. This recommendation is not based on the quality of those

wilderness values, but on the ability of BLM to effectively manage the area. Given the present land status in the Alamo Hueco Mountains, BLM does not feel it could reasonably manage the area as wilderness. In addition, with the lack of projected activities, low mineral potential, and lack of valid existing rights, it is expected that even without wilderness designation, the quality and level of values now found in the WSA would not significantly change.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The Alamo Hueco WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation. The recommendation for the Alamo Hueco WSA is based on the current status of the area, the principles, and

The Alamo Hueco WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation. The recommendation for the Alamo Hueco WSA is based on the current status of the area, the principles, and

APACHE BOX WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 932 Acres

The Apache Box Wilderness Study Area (WSA), AZ-040-76, is located in western Grant County in southwestern New Mexico about 45 miles west of Silver City, New Mexico, and 45 miles east of Safford, Arizona. The WSA contains 932 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The WSA is bounded on the north by U.S. Forest Service and New Mexico State lands, with private land forming the east, south, and west boundaries. The WSA's northern boundary is contiguous for 1 mile with the U.S. Forest Service administered Hell's Hole WSA. The Hell's Hole WSA is within the Gila National Forest and has been recommended by the U.S. Forest Service for non-wilderness uses.

The primary feature of the WSA is the Apache Box, a deep, narrow canyon through which runs Apache Creek. Sheer cliffs rise 600 feet above the canyon floor and give way to talus slopes and table lands above the canyon. Elevations range from 4,150 feet to 6,540 feet. Vegetation varies from desert shrubs and grasses to mountain shrub and pinyon-juniper. Riparian species line the creek through Apache Box.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0	Acres recommended wilderness
932	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The Apache Box WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). The recommendation for the Apache Box WSA is based on the mineral potential of the area, the anticipated likeli-

hood of future mineral development, and the non-wilderness recommendation for the 18,860-acre contiguous U.S. Forest Service administered Hell's Hole WSA. These factors combine to make the Apache Box WSA unmanageable as wilderness.

Based on past mineral exploration activity and the area's mineral resource potential, it is likely this use will occur in the future. Any mineral exploration activity will, however, be regulated to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation of the environment.

The Apache Box WSA could not be managed to preserve its wilderness character in the long-term. This judgment is based on the area's small size, the fact that it is bounded on three sides by private land, the mineral potential of the area, and the likelihood of further mineral exploration and possible development. Because of the area's small size, any development on adjacent private land would impact wilderness values in the WSA. Mineral exploration and development on the adjacent non-Federal lands are likely to occur in the future. Extensive mineral exploration and some development have occurred in the region in the past. As of November 1986, there were 93 mining claims wholly or partially within the WSA. It is expected that several of these claims would prove valid and would be developed. The entire 932 acres are rated by BLM Geologists as having moderate mineral resource potential.

The wilderness values identified in the Apache Box WSA were determined by BLM to be dependent on the presence of the contiguous U.S. Forest Service administered Hell's Hole WSA. The Hell's Hole WSA is within the Gila National Forest and contains 18,860 acres. The Hell's Hole WSA was recommended unsuitable for wilderness designation in the *Environmental Impact Statement: Gila National Forest Plan* completed in 1986.

MAP I

T15S

T16S

T16S

T17S

ARIZONA

NEW MEXICO

Winchester Peak

Tillie Hall Peak
APACHE

Yellowjacket Peak

FOREST

Brushy Mtn NATIONAL

Thunder Can

Draw

36 Bathub

31

Flo Canyon

Bear Creek

Apache Dark

Apache Box

Creek

Alexander

Blue

Canyon

Deer Peak

Bitter Saddleback Mtn

Crookson Quarry Peak

Juniper Peak

Cherry

SUMMIT

MOUNTAINS

Creek

Canyon

Summit Peak

36

31

Iron

China

Camp

Vanderbilt Peak

Carlisle

1

6

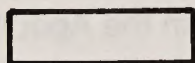
Kemp

Bud Wright Canyon

R21W

R21W

R20W



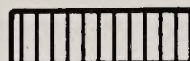
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None)



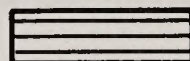
RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS



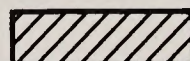
LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None)



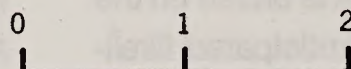
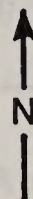
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)



PRIVATE (None)



MILES

Apache Box Proposal

AZ-4-76

April 1990

BIG HATCHET MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 65,872 Acres

The Big Hatchet Mountains Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-030-035, is located in southeastern Hidalgo County in the bootheel region of southwestern New Mexico, approximately 50 miles southeast of Lordsburg, New Mexico. The WSA includes 60,019 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land plus 5,853 acres of split-estate land (BLM surface with non-BLM minerals). There are 6,580 acres of State inholdings and 46 acres of private inholdings within the WSA. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.)

The WSA is an isolated mountain range with steep rugged terrain and includes rolling toe-slopes on all sides of the range. Elevations range from 4,400 feet along the lower toe-slopes to 8,366 feet atop Big Hatchet Peak. The WSA contains a variety of vegetation types including mixed desert shrubs surrounding the mountains, grass and mountain shrub types along the lower mountains, and pinyon-juniper communities with scattered Chihuahuah pine at higher elevations.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

45,374	Acres recommended wilderness
20,498	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Big Hatchet Mountains WSA is to designate 45,374 acres as wilderness and release the remaining 20,498 acres for uses other than wilderness (see Map 1). This recommendation

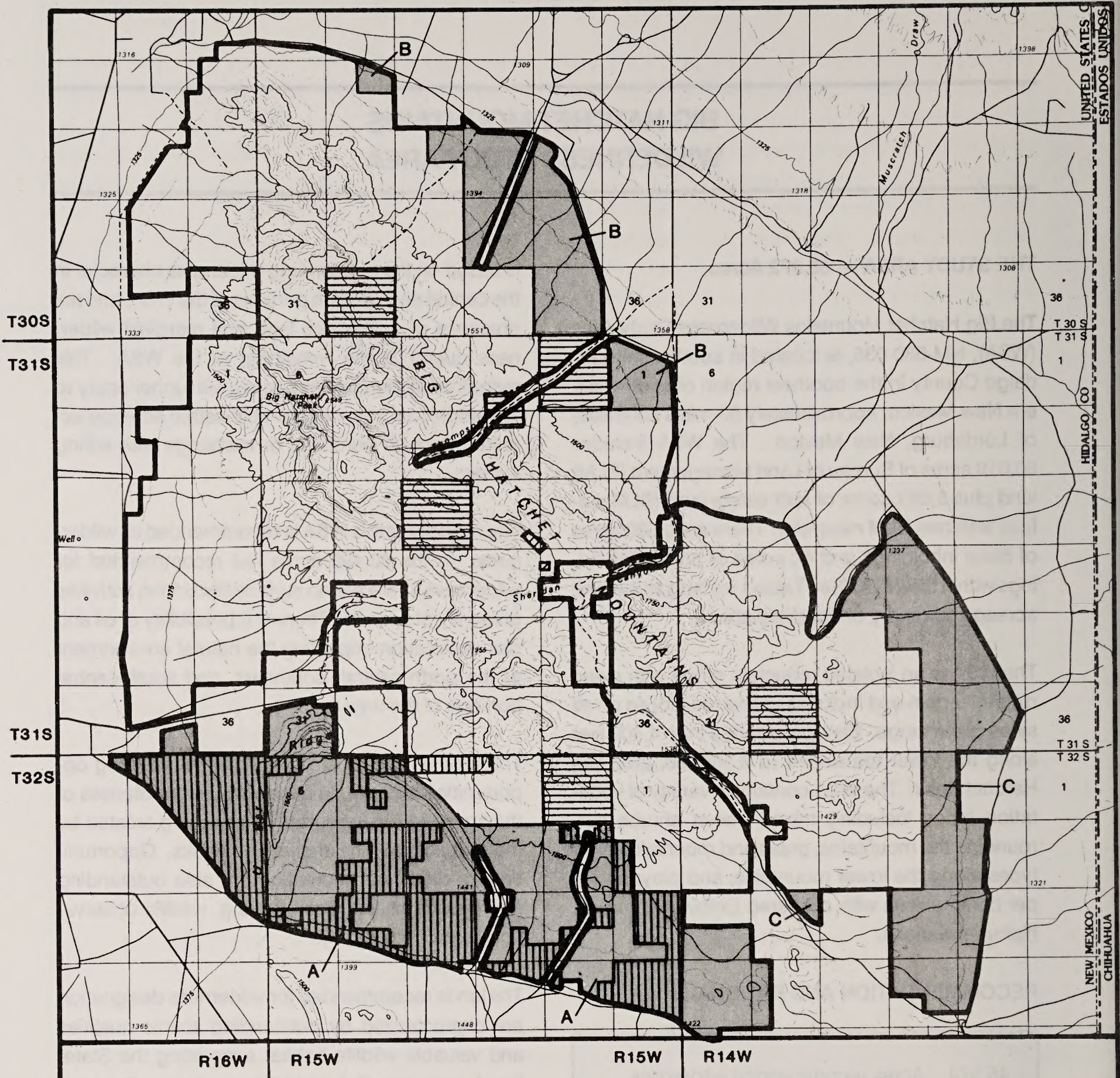
is based on the outstanding wilderness character in the central and western portions of the WSA, and the presence of split-estate land and marginal wilderness quality in the remainder of the WSA. This recommendation for wilderness will further apply to any additional inholding or split-estate acreage acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners.

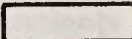


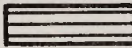


The majority of this WSA is recommended as wilderness. In the 20,498 acres not recommended for wilderness, there are no surface disturbing activities presently proposed. There is a possibility of oil and gas exploration impacting the natural environment of the north-central, southeast, and south-central portions of the area.

The recommended area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude based on the remoteness of the area and the topographic screening created by the rugged canyons and jagged peaks. Opportunities for dispersed recreation are also outstanding and include hiking, backpacking, wildlife observation, and photography.

The lands recommended for wilderness designation are characterized by outstanding scenic qualities and valuable wildlife habitat supporting the State-listed endangered desert bighorn sheep. Because of the sensitivity of desert bighorn sheep to development and disturbance, wilderness designation will provide a valuable, long-term benefit to maintaining the habitat requirements of this State-listed endangered species.

MAP 1

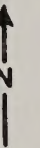


- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--------------|
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |  | STATE |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None) |  | PRIVATE |

0 1 2
MILES

Big Hatched Mountains Proposal
NM-030-035

April 1990



Boundaries for the area recommended for wilderness are formed by a combination of roads, land ownership boundaries, and section lines that approximate topographic boundaries. The area can be managed to preserve the quality of the wilderness characteristics. The topography and vegetation of the area and the absence of conflicting land uses or private rights would allow the BLM to manage the area to ensure its preservation and use as wilderness in an unimpaired condition.

Conflicts with other resource uses in the area recommended for wilderness designation are limited. Grazing use will be allowed to continue and facility maintenance needs in the WSA are minimal. There are no proposed livestock developments which would be foregone.

The mineral survey conducted by U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Bureau of Mines revealed two mineralized areas in the central part of the WSA which contain subeconomic mineral resources. On two patented mining claims at the Sheridan Mine, about 4,500 short tons of material were identified with average grades of 3.2 percent lead, 2.2 percent zinc, and 0.4 ounces of silver per ton. The Lead Queen mine showed an identified resource of 2,900 short tons of material with an average grade of 1.1 percent lead, 0.5 percent zinc, and 0.22 ounces of silver per ton. In neither case was the combination of tonnage and grade sufficient to identify a mineral resource of more than subeconomic value.

With the exception of the two identified resources, the entire WSA was determined to have low mineral resource potential for copper, lead, silver, zinc, uranium, and industrial rocks and minerals. The entire

WSA was determined to have a low potential for the occurrence of oil and gas.

The 20,498 acres not recommended for wilderness designation are in three separate parcels on the south, northeast, and southeast sides of the WSA (see Map 1). Parcel A contains 5,653 acres of split-estate land in the southwest portion of the WSA. Much of the mineral estate is owned by the State of New Mexico. The State is not willing to exchange the subsurface estate because of the perceived mineral potential of the area. Any mineral exploration and development of the subsurface estate would negatively impact BLM's ability to manage the surface estate as wilderness in this portion of the WSA:

In addition, parcels A, B, and C are all of a somewhat different character than the rest of the WSA. Because of the lack of variety of terrain features and vegetation, parcels A, B, and C do not provide the quality of opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation that are available in the portion of the WSA recommended for wilderness designation. Human imprints are more numerous and more noticeable in these parcels. Parcel A contains 4 miles of cherry-stemmed roads, 2 dirt tanks, and 3 erosion control dikes. Parcel A also contains several parcels of State and private lands which have not been identified for acquisition. Parcel B contains a fence, 1 1/2 miles of cherry-stemmed road, and a dirt tank. BLM Geologists identified parcels A, B, and C as having moderate potential for oil and gas. However, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Bureau of Mines evaluation of the WSA did not support this determination.

BLUE CREEK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA - 14,896 Acres

The Blue Creek Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-030-026, is located in northern Hidalgo and southwestern Grant Counties, 24 miles northwest of Lordsburg, New Mexico. The WSA includes 14,896 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and 1,280 acres of State inholdings. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.)

The WSA is bounded by a powerline and private land on the north and west sides, by a county road on the south, and by Blue Creek Arroyo and a dirt road on the east side.

The WSA is dominated by Black Mountain, an elongated, northwest trending mountain of black basalt. Slopes are gentle to moderate. Elevation varies from about 4,000 feet on the western edge of the WSA to nearly 5,600 feet on the top of Black Mountain. Vegetation is primarily desert shrubs, mixed mountain shrubs, and scattered juniper trees at the higher elevation.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0 Acres recommended wilderness

14,896 Acres recommended nonwilderness

The Blue Creek WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). While the area contains the values necessary for study, they are not

considered to be of a quality to merit inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS).

The Blue Creek WSA marginally meets the naturalness criterion. Numerous rangeland and watershed developments and 6 miles of vehicle ways are located within the WSA. These imprints are concentrated in locations that are very noticeable from areas in the WSA most likely to receive visitor use. These developments are located on Black Mountain's northeast slopes and in Seep Springs Draw and Blue Creek, and degrade the natural appearance of these key topographic features.

Although there are outstanding opportunities for solitude in the WSA, these characteristics exist primarily as a result of the remoteness of the region and the lack of special features in the WSA to attract visitors, rather than any intrinsic qualities contained in the WSA.

Although outstanding opportunities exist for primitive and unconfined recreation, there are better opportunities available in a nearby area. Only 3 miles to the south is the Gila Lower Box WSA which contains 5,835 acres recommended for wilderness designation. The Gila Lower Box provides better opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation because this area contains a combination of desert scenery, riparian vegetation, wildlife diversity, and cultural values. In terms of outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, the Blue Creek WSA is not comparable to the Gila Lower Box WSA.

In summary, the naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation in

This topographic map depicts the Black Mountain National Monument, outlined in a thick black border. The monument's terrain is shaded with a stippled pattern. Key geographical features include:

- Peaks and Elevation:** Mud Springs Peaks (1448), Riley Peaks (1452), and Mexican Springs (1326). Other elevations shown include 1411, 1410, 1366, 1344, 1313, 1266, 1243, 1291, and 1303.
- Canyons and Draws:** Mexican Canyon, Riley Canyon, John's Canyon, Hughs Canyon, Davenport Draw, Seep Draw, Blue Draw, and Nichols Canyon.
- Water Features:** Gila River, Redrock Creek, and various springs including Sunset Wells, Canal Well, and Spr.
- Infrastructure and Landmarks:** A landing strip, a radio peak facility, and a gravel pit are marked. A dashed line indicates a 'JEEP' trail.
- Grid and Coordinates:** The map is overlaid with a grid. The horizontal axis at the bottom is labeled R21W, R20W, R20W, and R19W. The vertical axis on the left is labeled 36S and 35S.

T19S

R19W

PRIVATE (None)

April 1990

the Blue Creek WSA are not exceptional and are similar to what would be available on any similar parcel of remote, relatively undeveloped BLM-administered land located throughout southwestern New Mexico.

There are no known special habitats or wildlife species in the WSA that would depend upon wilderness designation. While there are primitive recreation values, better and more diverse opportunities are

being recommended for preservation on nearby BLM land. In the Blue Creek WSA, there are no known or projected activities, no known mineral potential, and no valid rights of others in the WSA. Therefore, even without wilderness designation, the quality and level of the values now found in the WSA are not expected to significantly change.

Conclusion of the Final Blue Creek Wilderness Management Plan (1982)

While the Blue Creek WSA contains values, the WSA is not proposed as a wilderness area. It is recommended that the WSA be managed as a multiple-use area, with a focus on recreation and conservation. However, any future changes in the management of the WSA should be based on the best available information.

The WSA generally appears to be a good example of a multiple-use area. It contains a variety of values, including recreation, conservation, and cultural resources. The WSA is not proposed as a wilderness area because it does not contain values that are unique or exceptional. The WSA is managed as a multiple-use area, with a focus on recreation and conservation. However, any future changes in the management of the WSA should be based on the best available information.

Recommendation: The WSA is not proposed as a wilderness area. It is recommended that the WSA be managed as a multiple-use area, with a focus on recreation and conservation. However, any future changes in the management of the WSA should be based on the best available information.

CEDAR MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 14,911 Acres

The Cedar Mountains Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-030-042, is located in southwestern Luna County approximately 20 miles southwest of Deming, New Mexico. The WSA contains 14,911 acres of Bureau of Land Management Land (BLM) land. There are no State or private lands within the WSA boundary. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The northern and eastern boundary of the WSA are formed primarily by graded dirt roads. The southern and western boundaries are formed by State and private lands and approximately 3 miles of graded dirt roads.

The Cedar Mountains WSA contains a 4-mile segment of the Cedar Mountain Range. This mountain range is essentially a northwest-southwest trending ridge with scattered peaks. Drainages are steep and rocky at their origins along the mountain ridge. The lower elevations are characterized by more rolling, rounded hills and broader drainages. Elevations range from 4,700 feet in the northeast portion to 6,215 feet atop Flying W Mountain in the southern end of the WSA.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0 Acres recommended wilderness

14,911 Acres recommended nonwilderness

The Cedar Mountains WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). The quality of the wilderness values was the key consideration in the recommendation. While the WSA contained the wilderness values necessary for study, they are not

considered to be of a quality to merit the area's inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS).

While resource development activities within the WSA are not projected, there is a possibility for oil and gas exploration. If exploration were to occur, it is expected to result in two or three additional seismic lines in the area. However, very minor changes to the natural environment are expected.

The WSA generally appears natural but there are several site-specific signs of man, primarily range-land developments, which impact naturalness locally. Solitude opportunities available in the WSA are similar to those afforded by the thousands of acres of land adjacent to the WSA. These opportunities are due to the remoteness and lack of human activity in the area and are not due to any intrinsic values unique to the WSA. The WSA does not offer outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. There are no significant wildlife species or habitats, geologic features, or scientific and educational values in the area that would benefit from wilderness designation. There is one State-listed plant, night blooming cereus (*Cereus greggii*), and one cultural feature that have been identified, and these features will receive special protection from any surface disturbing activity.

At the present time, there is little threat to the existing naturalness of the area. There are no known or projected activities, no known mineral potential, and no valid rights of others in the WSA. Therefore, even without wilderness designation, the quality and level of values now found in the WSA are not expected to significantly change.

MAP I

T26S

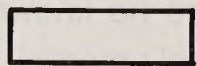
T27S

T27S

T28S

R13W

R12W



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS (None)



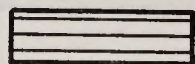
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
(None)



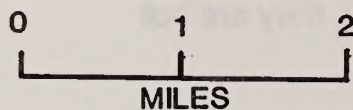
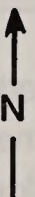
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)



PRIVATE (None)



Cedar Mountains Proposal

NM-030-042

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COOKE'S RANGE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 19,608 Acres

The Cooke's Range Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-030-031, is located in Luna County, approximately 15 miles north of Deming, New Mexico. The WSA contains 19,608 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, 2,080 acres of State inholdings, and 480 acres of private inholdings. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The boundary for the southern half of the WSA is primarily dirt roads, with some State land. The northern boundary is formed by State and private lands.

Cooke's Peak, with an elevation of 8,400 feet, rises over 3,600 feet above the surrounding plains and dominates the landscape for miles around. Portions of the north and east slopes of Cooke's Peak are within the boundaries of the WSA; however, much of the south and southwest slopes are on cherry-stemmed State and private lands. Several ridges, rising between 1,000 and 3,000 feet above the surrounding terrain, run the length of the WSA. These ridges, which form the backbone of the Range, are dissected by dozens of drainages and secondary ridges. Several steep-walled canyons and drop-offs are located in the WSA.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0	Acres recommended wilderness
19,608	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The Cooke's Range WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). The recommendation is based on the mineral potential of the area, the anticipated likelihood of future mineral

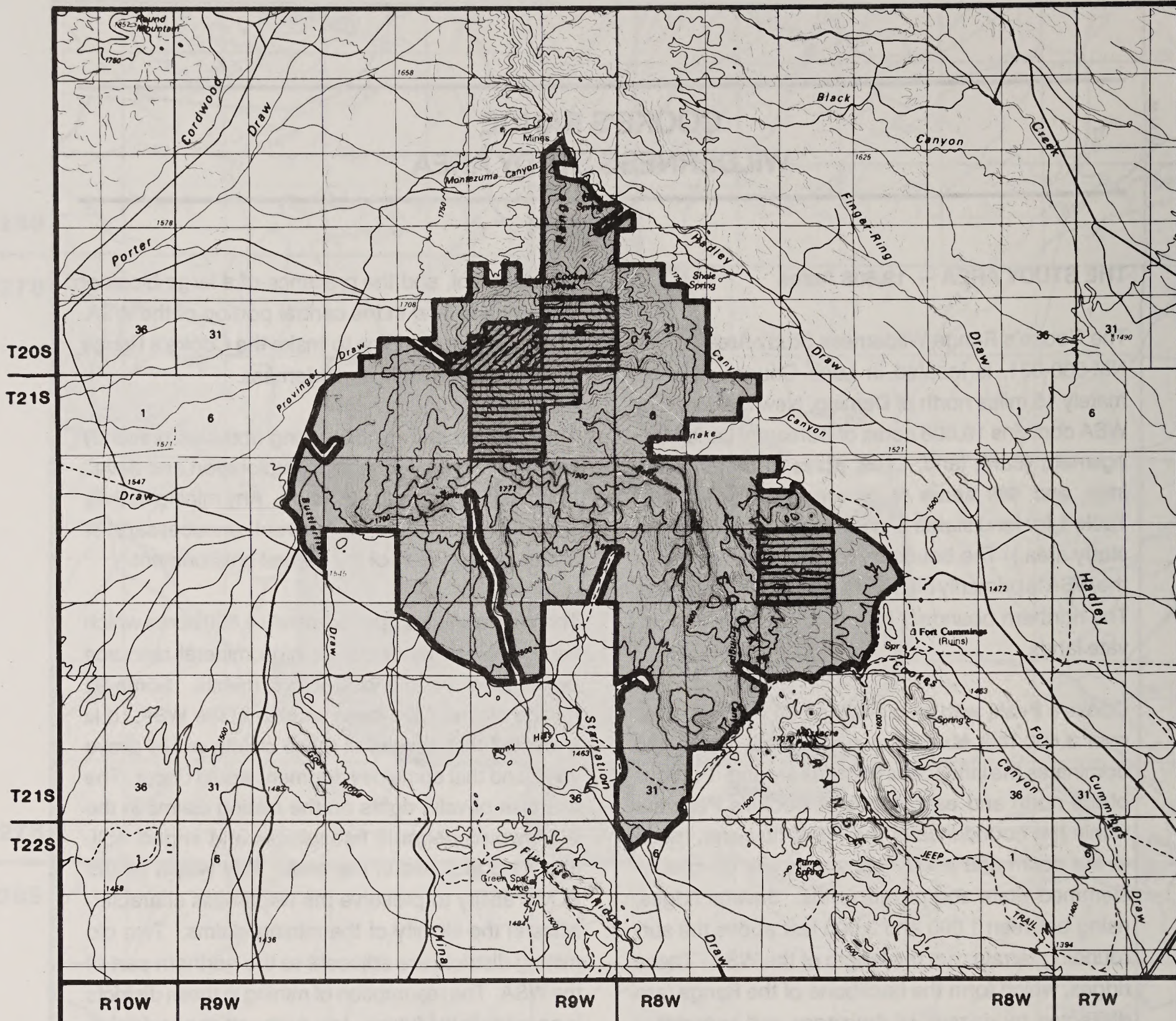
development, and the presence of a large block of non-Federal land in the central portion of the WSA. These factors combine to make the Cooke's Range WSA unmanageable as wilderness.

There are no surface disturbing activities presently proposed, however, mineral exploration and development may occur in the future. Any mining activity would be regulated to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the natural environment.

The WSA contains approximately 4,800 acres which were rated as moderate or high mineral resource potential for base and precious metals. Some 92 mining claims have been located in the WSA. It is expected that several of these claims would prove valid, and that some development would occur. The exercise of valid rights on the mining claims in the WSA would degrade naturalness and impact solitude opportunities in the area. This would hinder BLM's ability to preserve the wilderness characteristics in the vicinity of the mining claims. Two old mining districts are adjacent to the northern part of the WSA. The resumption of mining in these districts is possible in the future. Any such activity would also impair BLM's ability to manage the northern portion of the WSA as wilderness.

Much of the focal point of the WSA, Cooke's Peak, is in non-Federal ownership. A total of 1,920 acres of State and private lands on the south and southwest slopes of Cooke's Peak are excluded from the WSA. Full recreation use of the north-central portion of the WSA would not be possible without traversing or trespassing on these lands. The lands are in an area of moderate potential for minerals. Any mineral development on these lands would impact the soli-

MAP 1



Cooke's Range Proposal
NM-030-031

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tude opportunities of the surrounding WSA, and would hinder BLM's ability to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics in the long-term.

There is no question the Cooke's Range WSA has outstanding wilderness values. This recommendation is not based on the quality of those wilderness

values, but on the ability of BLM to effectively manage the area as wilderness. Given the mineral resource potential and the presence of over 260 mining claims in the historic mining districts in and around the Cooke's Range, BLM does not feel it could reasonably manage the area as wilderness.

COWBOY SPRING WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 6,699 Acres

The Cowboy Spring Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-030-007, is located in southern Hidalgo County, approximately 50 miles south of Lordsburg, New Mexico. The WSA contains 6,699 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. There are no State or private inholdings. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) A portion of the northeast boundary is formed by Cowboy Rim. The remainder of the WSA is bounded by State and private lands.

The WSA is dominated by Cowboy Rim, a prominent ridge 6,300 feet in elevation, running generally north-south through the east half of the WSA and curving to the west in the northern one-third of the WSA. The western portion of the WSA consists of the upper reaches of several canyons which drain to the southwest. The most prominent of these canyons is Elephant Butte Canyon which is about 325 feet deep.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

6,699 Acres recommended wilderness
0 Acres recommended nonwilderness

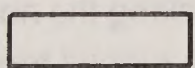
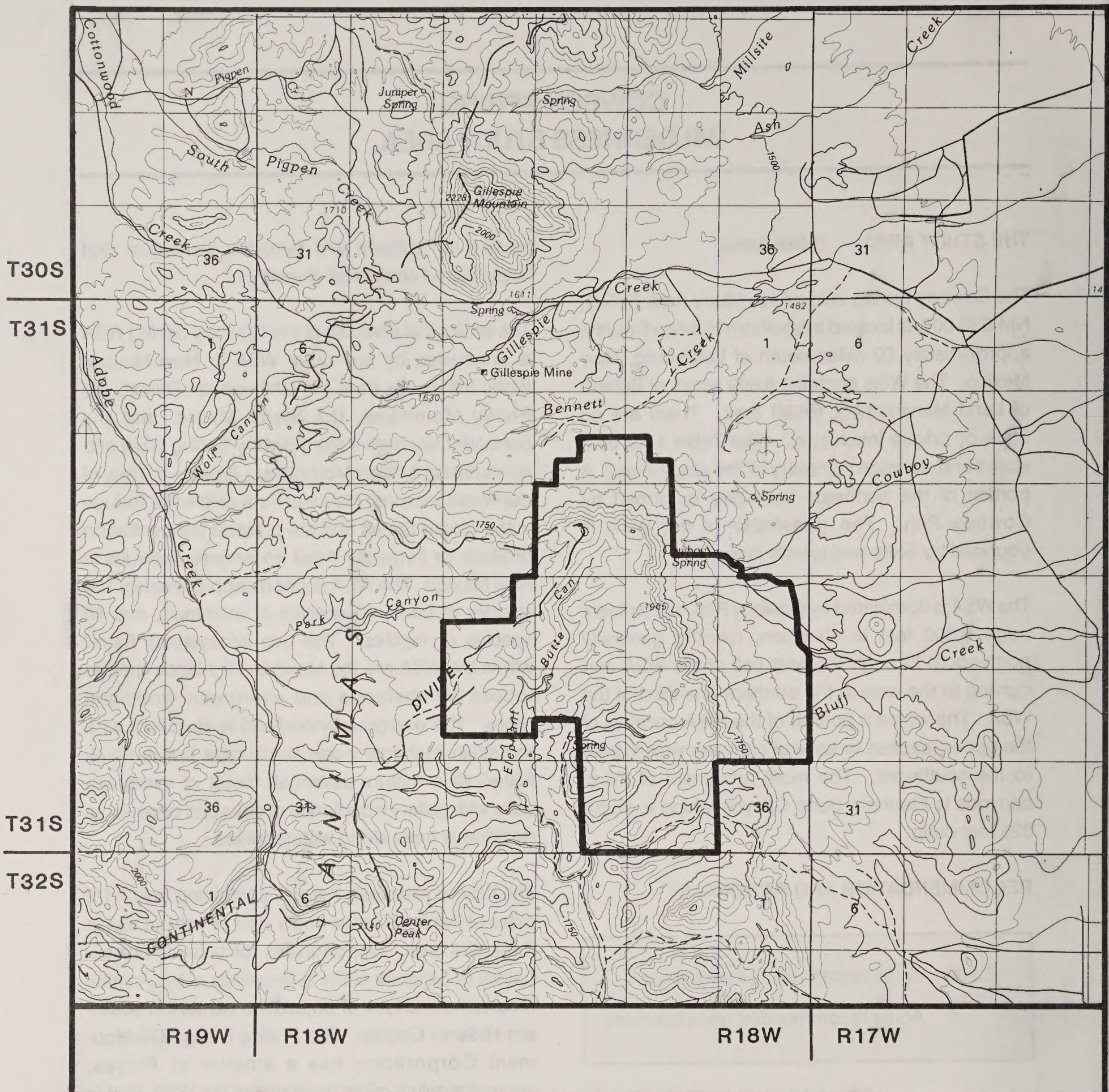
The recommendation for the Cowboy Spring WSA is to designate all 6,699 acres as wilderness (see Map 1). The basis for this recommendation is the area's exceptional naturalness, outstanding oppor-

tunities for solitude and primitive recreation, and unparalleled ecological diversity.

The ecological diversity of the Cowboy Spring WSA is unequaled by any other WSA in New Mexico. Biotic influences from the Chihuahuan Desert, the Rocky Mountains, the Sierra Madre, and the Sonoran Desert give the Cowboy Spring WSA and surrounding Animas Mountains a greater number of mammals than any National Park or Wildlife Refuge in the United States and the greatest concentration of State- or Federally-listed endangered species in New Mexico. The WSA supports approximately 130 species of birds, 60 species of mammals, and 40 species of reptiles. The two ecosystems found within the WSA are the Mexican Highlands grama-tobosa shrubsteppe and evergreen woodland types. The evergreen woodland is classified as a mountain mahogany-oak scrub type but is manifested as a mature savannah forest of evergreen oaks with gallery woodlands of oaks and occasional deciduous trees along watercourses.

The WSA is extremely natural, containing only 1 1/2 miles of livestock fence and 1 mile of vehicle trail in the entire area. Opportunities for solitude are exceptional because of the remoteness of the Animas Mountains and lack of population centers in southern Hidalgo County. The Phelps Dodge Development Corporation has a smelter at Playas, approximately 9 miles northeast of the WSA, that is visible from 20 percent of the WSA along the northern and northeastern portions. The rugged topog-

MAP I



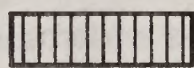
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



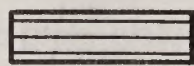
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS (None)



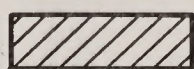
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
(None)



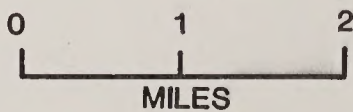
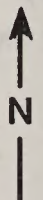
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)



PRIVATE (None)



Cowboy Spring Proposal

NM-030 -007

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raphy of the Cowboy Rim precludes views of the smelter from the remaining 80 percent of the WSA. Solitude is enhanced by topographic screening created by the Cowboy Rim and the numerous small drainages and ridges northeast and southwest of the rim as well as oak groves and trees.

The recreational values of the WSA are also exceptional, including opportunities for hiking, bird watching, and hunting for such species as Montezuma quail, javelina, and Coue's whitetail deer.

Conflicts with other resource uses in this WSA are limited. Livestock grazing currently occurs seasonally and will be allowed to continue. The entire WSA was rated by the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Bureau of Mines as having low potential for occurrence of undiscovered metals, fluorspar, oil and gas, and geothermal energy.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

Recommendation: The Cowboy Spring WSA should be designated as a National Natural Area. Rationale: The Cowboy Spring WSA is a unique and valuable natural resource. It contains a variety of rare and unusual geological features, including the Cowboy Rim, which is a prominent landmark in the area. The WSA also contains a variety of rare and unusual plant and animal life, including the Montezuma quail, javelina, and Coue's whitetail deer. The WSA is also a valuable recreational resource, offering opportunities for hiking, bird watching, and hunting.

The Cowboy Spring WSA is a unique and valuable natural resource. It contains a variety of rare and unusual geological features, including the Cowboy Rim, which is a prominent landmark in the area. The WSA also contains a variety of rare and unusual plant and animal life, including the Montezuma quail, javelina, and Coue's whitetail deer. The WSA is also a valuable recreational resource, offering opportunities for hiking, bird watching, and hunting.

Overall, the Cowboy Spring WSA is a unique and valuable natural resource. It contains a variety of rare and unusual geological features, including the Cowboy Rim, which is a prominent landmark in the area. The WSA also contains a variety of rare and unusual plant and animal life, including the Montezuma quail, javelina, and Coue's whitetail deer. The WSA is also a valuable recreational resource, offering opportunities for hiking, bird watching, and hunting.

FLORIDA MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 22,336 Acres

The Florida Mountains Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-030-034A, is located in southeast Luna County, approximately 10 miles southeast of Deming, New Mexico. The WSA includes 22,336 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, 80 acres of State inholdings, and 27 acres of private inholdings. The WSA is bounded on the north by State and private lands. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The eastern and southeast boundaries are formed by County Road B023 and ranch roads extending south from the county road. The western boundary is formed by a powerline right-of-way and by State and private lands in the Mahoney Park area.

The WSA consists of steep, rocky terrain dissected by numerous canyons. Elevations range from about 4,300 feet to over 7,000 feet. Vegetation is primarily grasses and mixed desert shrubs at the lower elevations to scattered juniper and mountain shrubs on the peaks and ridges.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0	Acres recommended wilderness
22,336	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The Florida Mountains WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). The recommendation is based on the area's mineral resource potential, probable mineral development on valid

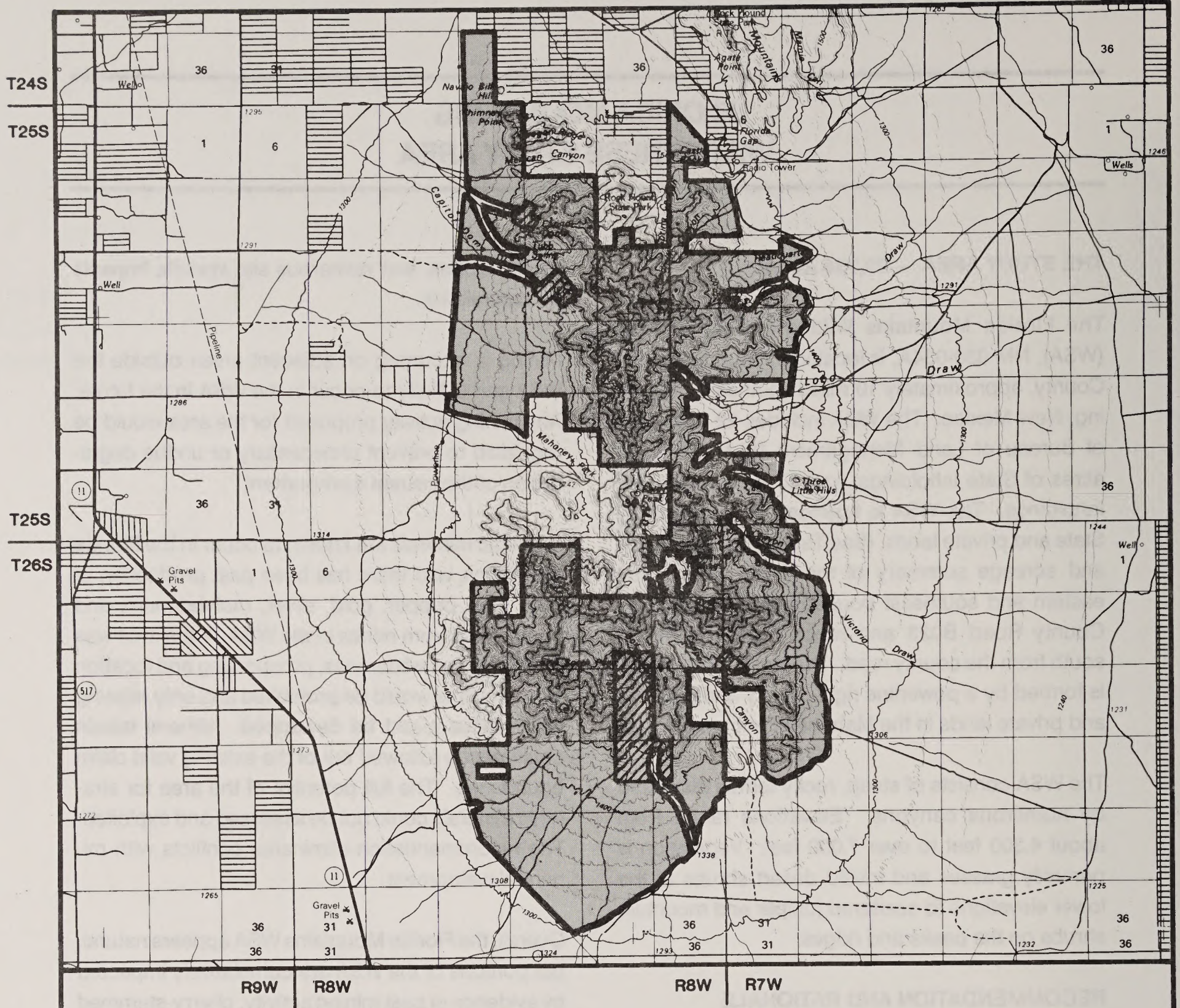
mining claims, and numerous site-specific impacts on naturalness.

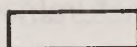
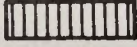

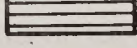
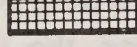
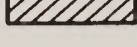
Mining is occurring on adjacent areas outside the WSA and is likely to occur in the WSA in the future. Any mining activity proposed for the area would be regulated to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the natural environment.

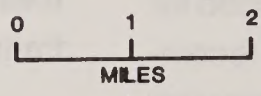
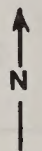
Strategic minerals are known to occur in the Florida Mountains, and there has been past production of lead, zinc, copper, gold, silver, molybdenum, and manganese from mines in the WSA. If the area was designated as wilderness, prospecting and location of new claims would be prohibited and only existing valid claims could be developed. Mineral trends could not be followed out of the existing valid claim boundaries. The full potential of the area for strategic minerals could not be assessed and exploited. The recommendation eliminates conflicts with mineral development.

Overall, the Florida Mountains WSA appears natural, but portions of the WSA are cumulatively impacted by evidence of past mining activity, cherry-stemmed roads, and rangeland developments. Mining activity has had the greatest impact on the naturalness in the Florida Mountains, especially in the northeast and east-central portions of the WSA. Mining impacts include open shafts and adits, prospect pits and trenches, mine dumps, tailings piles, the remains of old structures, structures such as headframes, and junked vehicles. These imprints of man

MAP 1



- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---------------------|
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None) |  | SPLIT ESTATE (None) |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |  | STATE |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None) |  | PRIVATE |



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NM-030-034

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are found in virtually every major canyon on the east side of the mountain range. While some of the actual physical impacts have been excluded from the WSA by cherry-stemming, they still impact the perception of naturalness in the canyons in which they are located. Mining activity is being conducted along the central ridge of the mountains on claims that have been cherry-stemmed. There is potential that this activity could be expanded into the WSA.

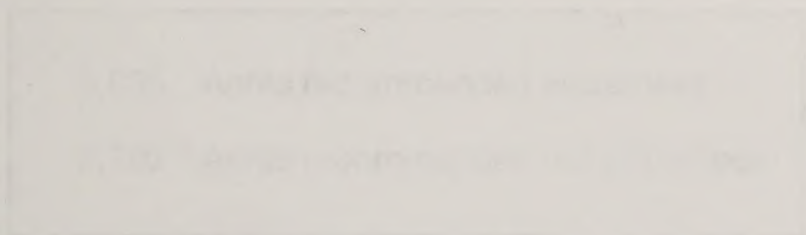
Eleven roads are cherry-stemmed out of the WSA. These roads lead to private land, mining areas, or windmills. Rangeland developments in the WSA include 8 improved springs with troughs and 17 miles of fence. Three wells with windmills and associated facilities are cherry-stemmed out of the WSA. The WSA also contains four wildlife waters. By

themselves, these facilities do not have a significant impact on the WSA. However, because they are dispersed throughout the area, it is difficult not to be constantly reminded of man's past presence in the WSA. Only in an area of 3,000 acres, in the most rugged part of the WSA around South Peak, can one escape all signs of man.

The quality of opportunities for solitude along the east slopes of the Florida Mountains is somewhat diminished by cherry-stemmed roads to rangeland developments and past mining activity.

There are no known special habitats or wildlife species dependent upon wilderness designation.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE



The recommendation for the Florida Mountains WSA is to designate 5,250 acres as wilderness and to

The recommendation for the Florida Mountains WSA is to designate 5,250 acres as wilderness and to

GILA LOWER BOX WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 8,555 Acres

The Gila Lower Box Wilderness Study Area (WSA), (NM-030-023), is located 23 miles northwest of Lordsburg, New Mexico in northern Hidalgo County. The WSA contains 8,555 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and 160 acres of private inholdings. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The western boundary and a portion of the northern boundary are formed by private and State lands. The remainder of the northern boundary is formed by the rock escarpment on the north canyon wall of the box. The eastern and southern boundaries are formed primarily by roads and State land.

The WSA contains a portion of the Gila River and the Lower Box Canyon. The WSA is characterized by steep canyon walls; numerous short, steep-walled, side canyons; a narrow canyon bottom and sides that rise abruptly from the river's edge. Structural benches and erosional columns, or hoodoos, occur in various places along the river. The southern portion of the WSA away from the canyon contains gently rolling hills and drainages into the Gila River.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

5,835	Acres recommended wilderness
2,720	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Gila Lower Box WSA is to designate 5,835 acres as wilderness and release the remaining 2,720 acres for uses other than

wilderness (see Map 1). The area recommended for wilderness designation includes the highest wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, and primitive recreation and the most important special features. The 2,720 acres not recommended for wilderness designation are of a different character and contain lower quality wilderness values. This recommendation for wilderness will further apply to any additional inholding acreage acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners.

The lands recommended for designation are characterized by outstanding scenic qualities associated with the river canyon, side canyons, the river itself, and riparian vegetation. The recommended area provides habitat for a variety of wildlife species including raptors, other birds, mule deer, javelina, and several fish species. As many as half of the vertebrate species which occur in New Mexico can be found in the Lower Gila River system. Most of these species occur in the WSA. Peregrine falcons, bald eagles, and golden eagles have been observed in the area. Several State-endangered species are also found in the recommended area. Wilderness designation will ensure long-term protection of habitat for endangered species as well as the highly important riparian habitat found in the canyon bottoms.

The recreation opportunities offered in the recommended wilderness are unique and outstanding. These opportunities include float boating, fishing in a wild setting, and a variety of other activities made possible by a combination of the canyon, river, vegetation, and scenery.

MAP I

T19S

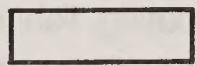
T20S

T21W

T20W

R20W

R19W



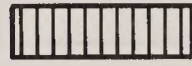
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



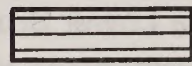
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
(None)



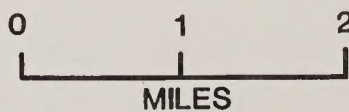
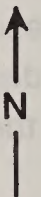
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)



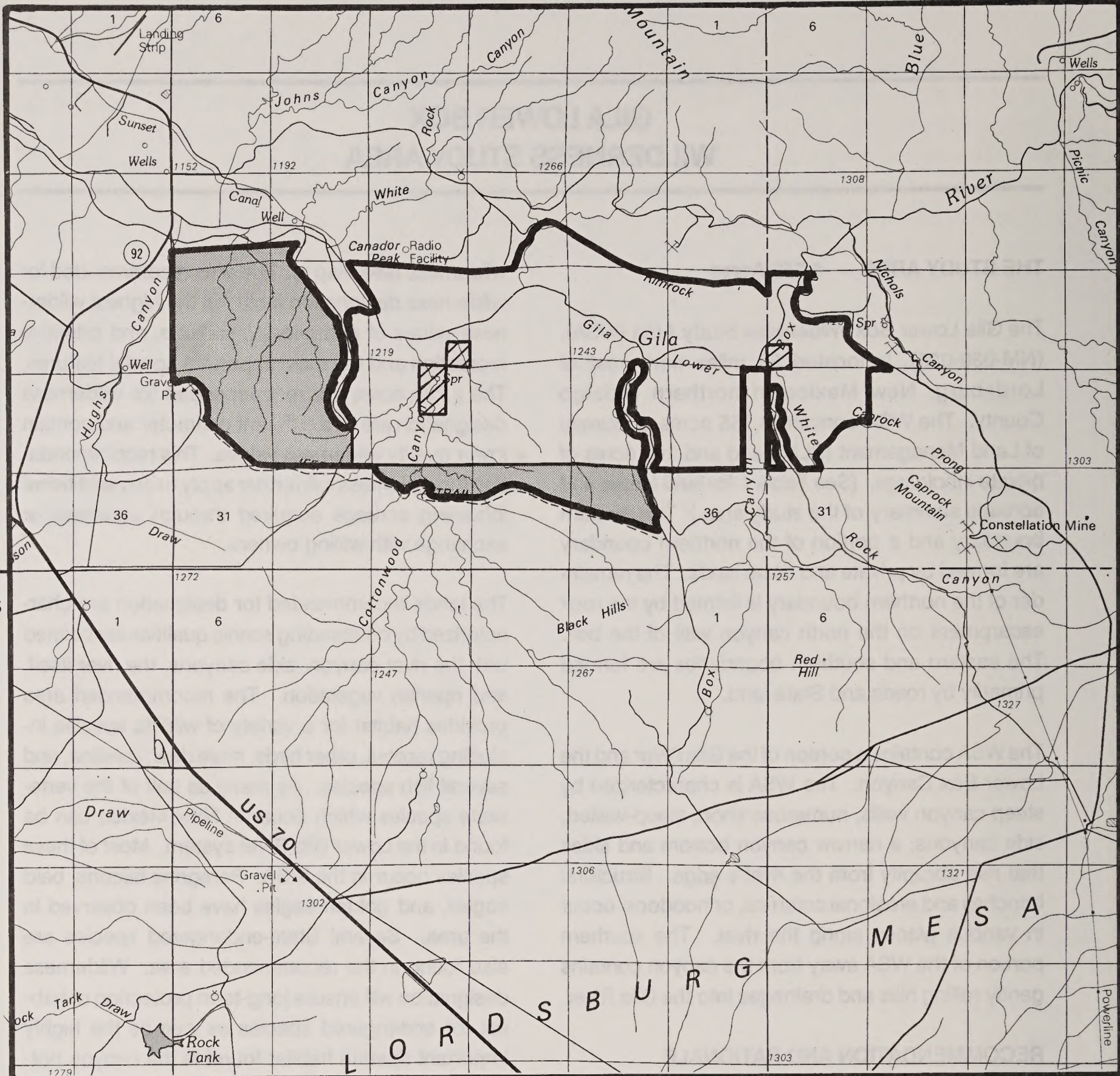
PRIVATE



Gila Lower Box Proposal

NM-030-023

April 1990



The Gila River was the center of activity for primitive peoples in the past. The recommended wilderness area contains evidence of their presence including petroglyph panels and rock shelters. Wilderness designation would help to ensure protection of these significant resources.

Designation of the area recommended for wilderness would protect a river system in an arid environment. Such a system is not common in New Mexico and much of the desert Southwest. The area's naturalness, outstanding wilderness values, diversity of wildlife species and other special features would make a valuable addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS).

The area recommended for wilderness can be managed to preserve the quality of the wilderness characteristics. The boundaries on about half of the area are along natural terrain or man-made features. The southern boundary is along section lines. This boundary could be signed at intervals to identify it on the ground.

The conflicts with other resource uses of lands recommended for wilderness designation in this WSA are limited. Grazing use will be allowed to continue. Maintenance requirements for rangeland developments are minimal and no new projects would be foregone. The private inholdings in the recommended wilderness area are used in association with livestock grazing. Continued use of these inholdings will not hinder BLM's ability to manage the area to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the U.S. Bureau of Mines rated the WSA as having moderate and high mineral potential for manganese. This rating is based on the presence of manganese in shallow veins within 1/4 mile of the study area. Minor amounts of manganese were found in prospect pits within the study area, but were not considered economical. Therefore, even though the mineral resource potential is moderate and high for the occurrence of manganese, it is unlikely that any development will occur in the foreseeable future. In addition, BLM feels the value of the area as wilderness outweighs the potential mineral values that would be foregone under wilderness designation.

The 2,720 acres not recommended for wilderness designation are of a different physical character and have less wilderness qualities than the recommended area. This area is characterized by rolling hills, arroyos, and desert shrub vegetation. The more open country provides a different type of solitude than that associated with the steep walls and canyons of the Gila Lower Box. There are no special features associated with the 2,720 acres. The area is less natural than the portion of the WSA recommended for wilderness designation. The area contains erosion control dikes, corrals, and several fences. The recommendation would also exclude a 1 mile long cherry-stem road in the western portion of the WSA.

GUADALUPE CANYON INSTANT STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 4,145 Acres

The Guadalupe Canyon Instant Study Area (ISA), NM-ISA-001, is located in extreme southwestern Hidalgo County in the southwestern corner of New Mexico, 70 miles south-southwest of Lordsburg, New Mexico and 30 miles east of Douglas, Arizona. The ISA contains the 3,691-acre Guadalupe Canyon Outstanding Natural Area (ONA) and 454 acres of adjacent split-estate (Federal surface/non-Federal subsurface ownership) land. The ISA was studied for wilderness suitability in a joint study with the Coronado National Forest Bunk Robinson Wilderness Study Area (WSA) and the BLM Safford District Baker Canyon WSA. The ISA is bounded by private land on the east, south, and west sides and Forest Service land on the north.

The WSA is dominated by Guadalupe Canyon, a northeast-southeast draining canyon that flows into Bavispe Creek south of the Mexico-Arizona border. It is one of the few creeks in the United States that are part of the Yaqui River drainage. Slopes are gentle to moderate. Elevations vary from 3,980 to 5,715 feet. Vegetation ranges from sycamore riparian forest to mixed desert shrub, grass, and juniper-oak woodland.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0	Acres recommended wilderness
4,145	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The Guadalupe Canyon ISA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). This recommendation is based on the nonsuitable recommendation for the contiguous U.S. Forest Service administered Bunk Robinson WSA. While the Gua-

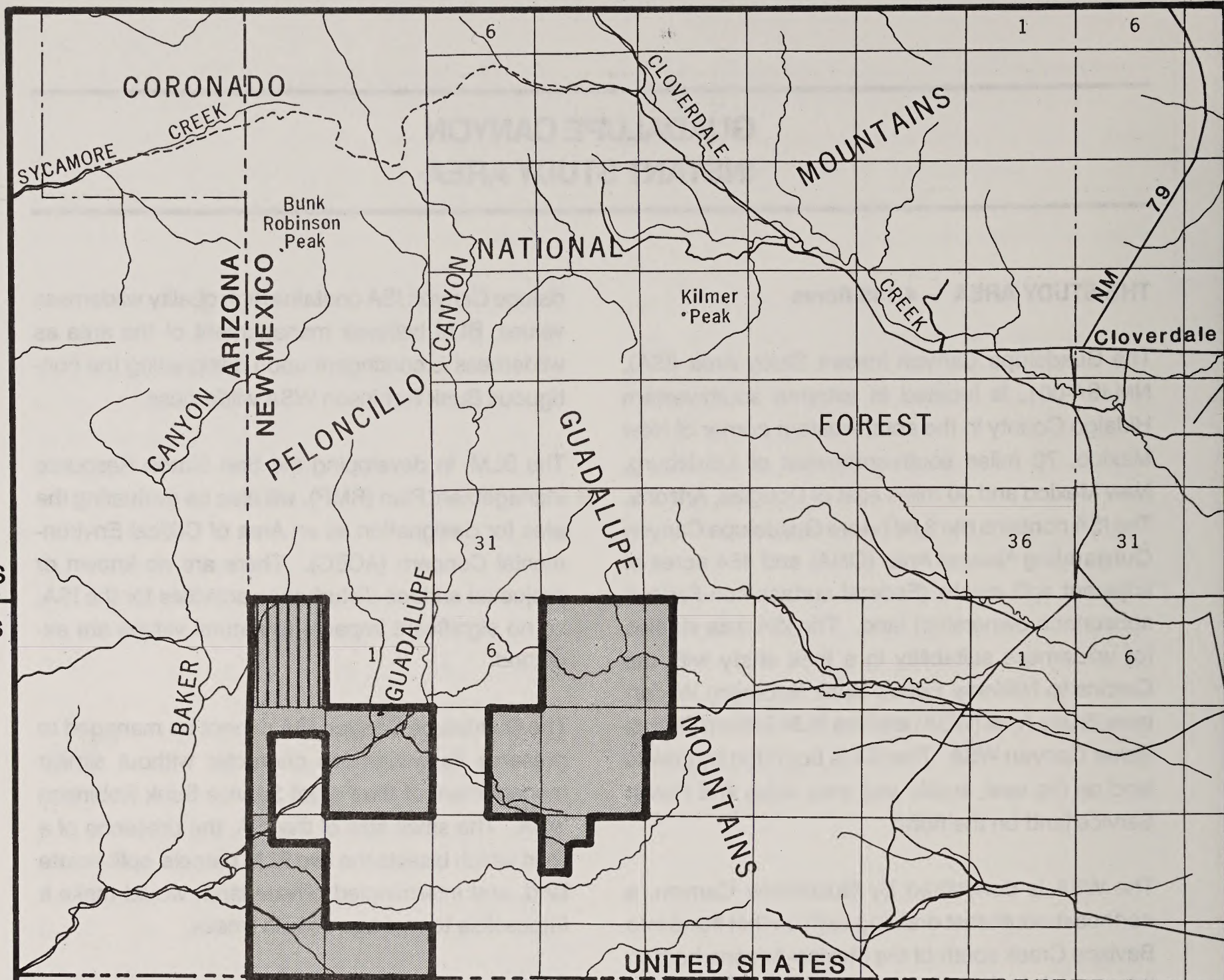
dalupe Canyon ISA contains high quality wilderness values, BLM believes management of the area as wilderness is contingent upon designating the contiguous Bunk Robinson WSA wilderness.

The BLM, in developing the San Simon Resource Management Plan (RMP), will also be evaluating the area for designation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). There are no known or projected surface disturbance activities for the ISA, so no significant impacts to natural values are expected.

The Guadalupe Canyon ISA cannot be managed to preserve its wilderness character without similar management of the Forest Service Bunk Robinson WSA. The small size of the ISA, the presence of a road which bisects the two BLM parcels, split-estate land, and intermingled private land, would make it impossible to manage as wilderness.

MAP I

T33S
T34S



Guadalupe Canyon Proposal

NM-ISA-001

April 1990

LAS UVAS MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 11,067 Acres

The Las Uvas Mountains Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-030-065, is located in northwestern Dona Ana County, approximately 30 miles northwest of Las Cruces, New Mexico and 7 miles south of Hatch, New Mexico. The WSA contains 11,067 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, 40 acres of private inholdings, and 80 acres of State inholdings. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) Approximately 80 percent of the WSA is bounded by State and private lands. The remaining boundaries are roads.

This WSA consists of the northwest part of the Sierra de Las Uvas. The Las Uvas Mountains are composed of tilted, bedded volcanic rock with a gentle western slope and cliffs on the east side. The WSA is characterized by mesas, buttes, and canyons. Elevations within the WSA range from 4,600 feet in the northern part of the area to 6,198 feet near Little White Gap in the south. Vegetation is primarily grasses and desert shrubs, with juniper on north facing slopes and at higher elevations.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0	Acres recommended wilderness
11,067	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The Las Uvas Mountains WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). This rec-

ommendation is based on the area's marginal naturalness, limited recreation opportunities, and lack of special features.

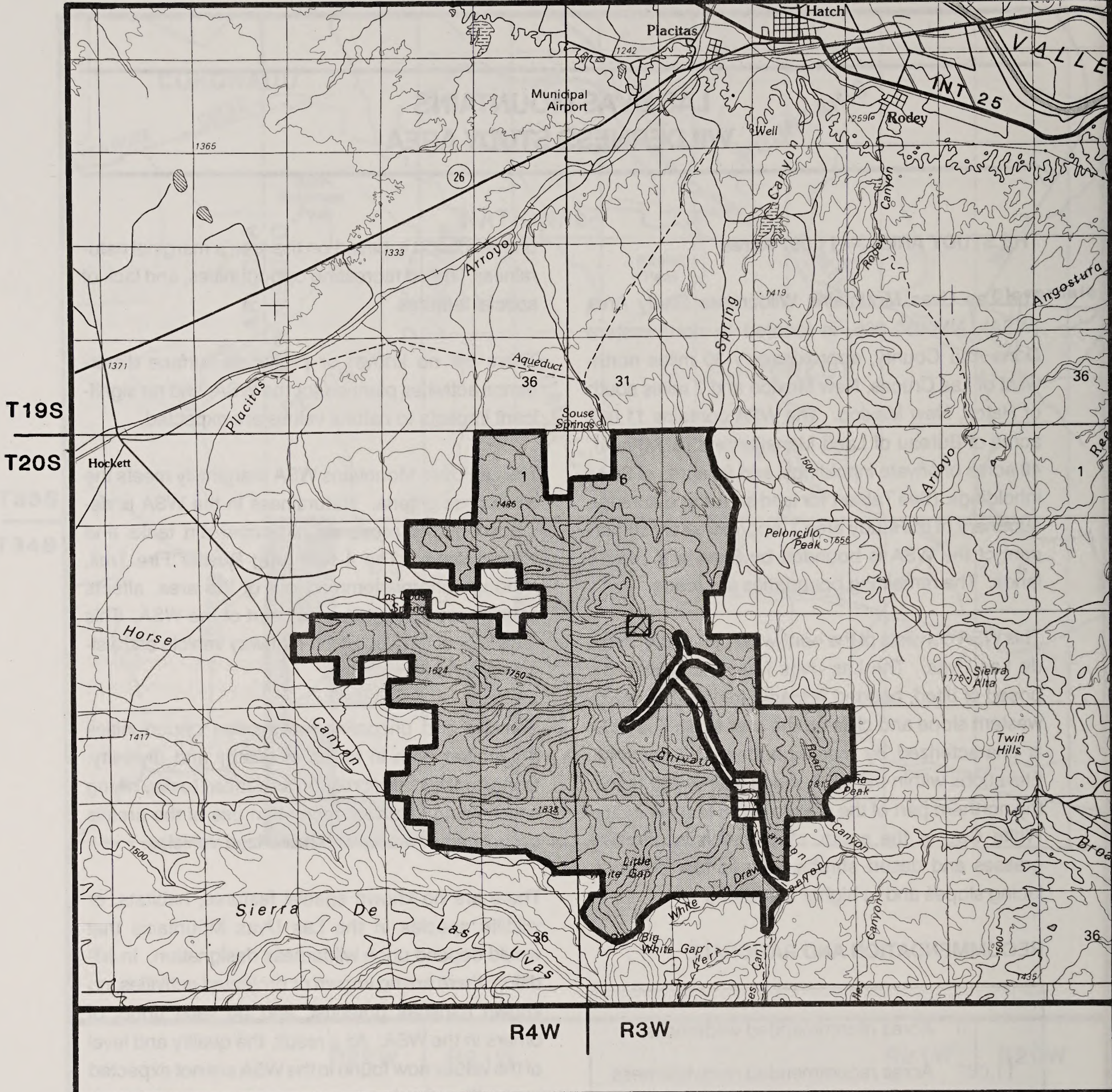
There are no known or projected surface disturbance activities planned for the WSA, and no significant impacts to natural values are expected.

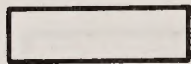
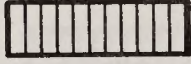

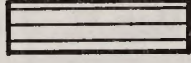


The Las Uvas Mountains WSA marginally meets the wilderness criteria. Naturalness in the WSA is degraded by the presence of several dirt tanks and vehicle ways. The 4-mile long Rustler Fire Trail, although cherry-stemmed out of the area, affects naturalness throughout the heart of the WSA. This road is heavily used by off-highway vehicle enthusiasts and hunters.

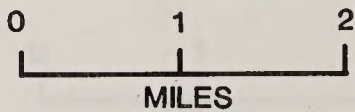
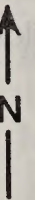
Primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities are limited both in terms of quality and diversity. Opportunities for recreation are limited to day hiking and hunting. Current recreation use of the area is associated primarily with motorized vehicles.

There are no known special features, habitats, or wildlife species in the Las Uvas Mountains that would depend upon wilderness designation. In addition, there are no known or projected activities, no known minerals potential, and no valid rights of others in the WSA. As a result, the quality and level of the values now found in the WSA are not expected to significantly change.

MAP I



- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---------------------|
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None) |  | SPLIT ESTATE (None) |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |  | STATE (None) |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None) |  | PRIVATE |



Las Uvas Mountains Proposal

NM-030-065

April 1990

ORGAN MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 7,283 Acres

The Organ Mountains Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-030-074, is located in Dona Ana County, approximately 15 miles east of Las Cruces in south-central New Mexico. The WSA includes 7,283 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and 131 acres of patented mining claims. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the area.) The WSA is bounded on the west by a county road, State and private lands, and a powerline; on the north by a powerline; on the east by a paved road, and on the south by New Mexico State University (NMSU) land and a mining road.

The WSA is a portion of a north-south trending fault block mountain range characterized by extremely rugged and steep spires, canyons, and cliffs. Elevations within the WSA range from 5,000 to 8,010 feet. The WSA contains mixed desert shrub, pinyon-juniper-mixed mountain shrub, and Ponderosa pine vegetation types.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

7,283	Acres recommended wilderness
0	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Organ Mountains WSA is to designate the entire area wilderness (see Map 1). This area is recommended for wilderness designation because of its exceptionally high quality

wilderness values including naturalness; opportunities for solitude, primitive recreation and scenic quality; threatened and endangered flora and fauna; wildlife habitat; and manageability as wilderness. This recommendation for wilderness will further apply to any additional inholding or split-estate acreage acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners. Appendix 1 lists all inholdings and split-estate tracts and provides additional information on acquisition of inholdings and split-estate minerals.

The WSA is generally natural. Human imprints are limited, and viewing areas where these imprints are discernable are all minimized by rugged topography. The major topographic features of the WSA remain unaffected by the imprints of man. The WSA appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature and the imprint of man's work is substantially unnoticeable.

The Organ Mountains WSA provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. The rugged mountain range contains numerous major ridges and large canyons with each major topographic feature branching into countless smaller features. These features provide numerous areas to find seclusion from others. The Organ Mountains WSA offers outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation in terms of both quality and diversity of available opportunities. The WSA offers outstanding opportunities for horseback riding, hiking, hunting, and photography. Rock climbing op-

MAP I

T21S

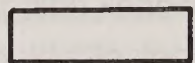
T22S

T22S

T23S

R3E

R4E



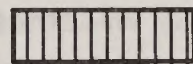
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



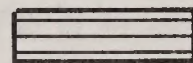
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS (None)



LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
(None)



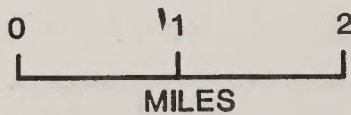
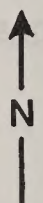
SPLIT ESTATE



STATE (None)



PRIVATE (None)



Organ Mountains Proposal

NM-030-074

April 1990

portunities in the Organ Mountains are nationally significant. Opportunities for sightseeing geological and botanical features are excellent throughout the WSA. The Baylor Pass National Recreation trail traverses approximately 3 miles of the WSA.

An 8,947-acre portion of the Organ Mountains has been designated as the Organ Mountains Scenic Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) including approximately 6,040 acres of the WSA. The Organ Mountains are viewed daily by a resident population in excess of 80,000 people. Recreation use within designated areas exceeds 100,000 visits annually. The scenic resources of the Organ Mountains are also important to Las Cruces residents who share the attitude that the Organ Mountains should be preserved and protected, citing them as centers of recreational activity and a source of considerable civic pride.

The WSA provides habitat for two plant species which are candidates for Federal listing and two plant species listed by the New Mexico State Forestry Division as endangered and candidates for Federal listing.

The Organ Mountains also have a diverse wildlife community. The WSA provides habitat for the State endangered Colorado chipmunk and four species of endemic molluscs listed as elements of concern by the New Mexico State Forestry Division. The State endangered desert bighorn sheep occurred in the area historically and could be reintroduced.

The area recommended for wilderness can be managed to preserve the quality of the wilderness characteristics. Most boundaries are readily identifiable because of the man-made features. The topography and vegetation of the area and the absence of conflicting land uses or private rights would allow the BLM to manage the area to ensure its preservation and use as wilderness in an unimpaired condition.

Conflicts with other resource uses in this WSA are limited. Grazing use will be allowed to continue and

facility maintenance needs in the WSA are minimal. There are no proposed livestock developments which would be foregone as a result of wilderness designation.

The mineral survey conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Bureau of Mines revealed the area contained subeconomic resources of common variety carbonate rock and sand and gravel. Immediately adjacent to and surrounded by the study area, copper resources are present at the Torpedo mine; silver, lead, zinc, and possibly gold resources are present at the Stephenson-Bennett mine; and fluorspar resources are present at the Ruby mine. The Torpedo mine is located a few hundred yards north of the WSA. The Stephenson-Bennett mine and the Ruby mine are cherry-stemmed out of the WSA on the northwest and west sides, respectively.

The mineral resource potential for copper, molybdenum, gold, and silver is high in a small area along the north edge of the WSA. The potential for lead, zinc, copper, silver, gold, and fluorspar resources is moderate along a broad band running north and south on the western edge of the WSA. The mineral resource potential for oil and gas, and for geothermal energy is low throughout the WSA. These findings are similar to those made by BLM geologists.

Designation of the Organ Mountains as wilderness would preclude mineral exploration and development along a zone with moderate potential for fluorspar and moderate and high potential for base and precious metals at depth. However, it was determined that the high wilderness values of the WSA should be preserved even if development of the metallic mineral resources would be foregone.

PELONCILLO MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA - 4,061 Acres

The Peloncillo Mountains Wilderness Study Area (WSA), AZ-040-60, is located in northeast Hidalgo County, New Mexico along the Arizona State line. Originally, the WSA was contiguous with the Peloncillo Mountains WSA in Arizona. In November 1990, a bill was passed which designated 19,650 acres of the Peloncillo Mountains as wilderness. This included the entire WSA in Arizona. The 4,061 acres in New Mexico was not affected by this legislation and remains in WSA status. There are no State or private inholdings or split estate in the WSA in New Mexico. (See Table 1.)

In New Mexico, the WSA is bordered on the north by State and private land and on the east and south by public and State land. The WSA boundary follows, almost entirely, legal subdivisions (see Map 1). This boundary was the result of the mixed ownership pattern of public, State, and private land.

The WSA lies in a rugged part of the Peloncillo Mountains, a north-south trending mountain range that roughly parallels the Arizona and New Mexico stateline from Mexico to the Gila River east of Safford. Topographic features of the WSA include rolling hills and steep mountain slopes, with rolling hills and flatlands the predominant aspect of the WSA. Elevations range from 4,325 feet in the eastern part of the WSA to 6,400 feet along the Arizona border.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0 Acres recommended wilderness

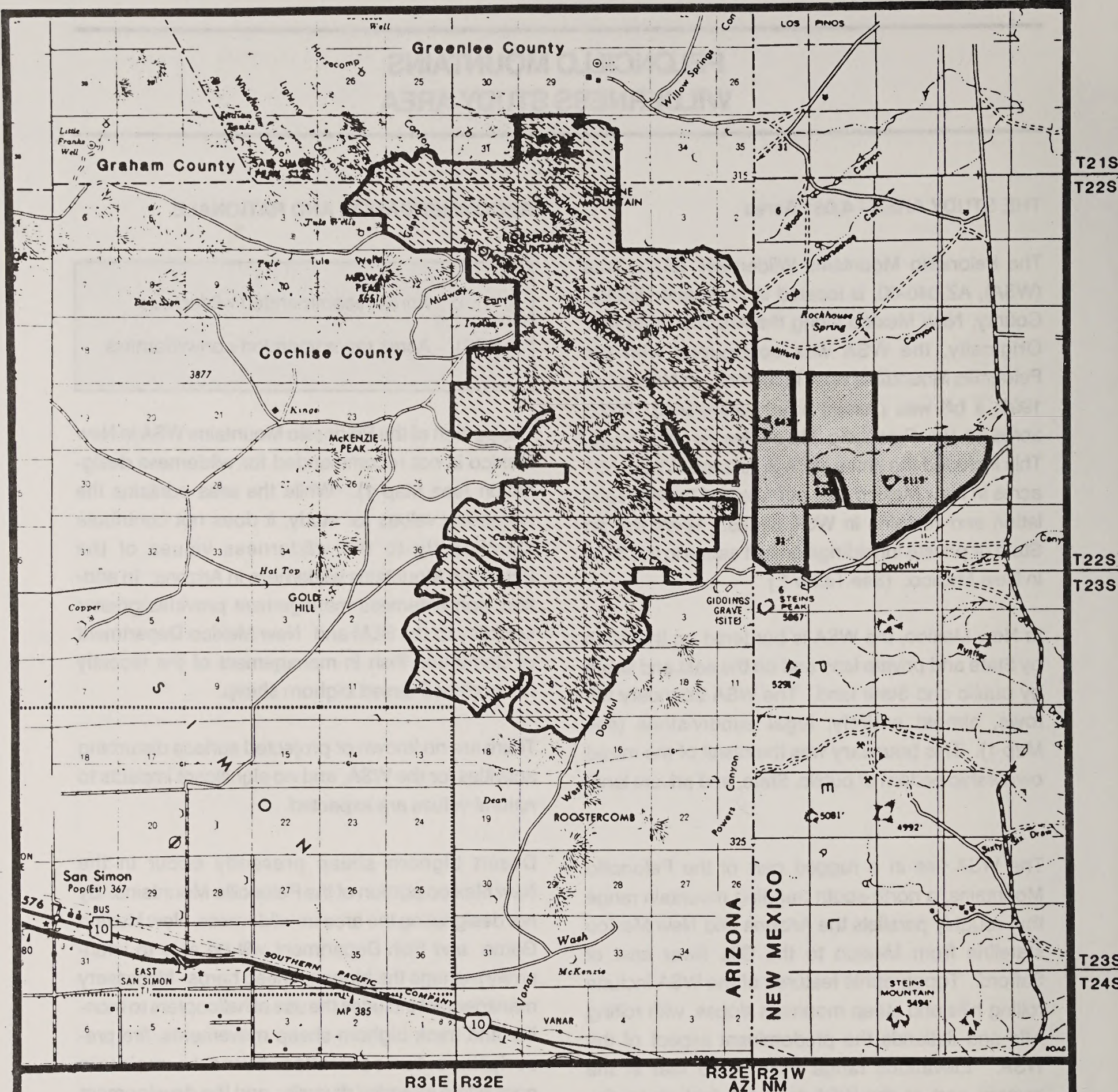
4,061 Acres recommended nonwilderness

The portion of the Peloncillo Mountains WSA in New Mexico is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). While the area contains the necessary values for study, it does not contribute significantly to the wilderness values of the Peloncillo Mountains wilderness in Arizona. In addition, nonwilderness management provides greater flexibility to the BLM and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish in management of the recently reintroduced desert bighorn sheep.

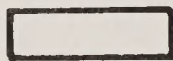
There are no known or projected surface disturbing activities for the WSA, and no significant impacts to natural values are expected.

Desert bighorn sheep presently occur in the New Mexico portion of the Peloncillo Mountains. By not designating the area as wilderness, New Mexico Game and Fish Department will be able to intensively manage the bighorn sheep herds. Necessary management includes the use of helicopters to monitor and track bighorn sheep movements, fire prescriptions for controlled burns to maintain ecosystem integrity/ diversity, and the development

MAP 1



DESIGNATED AS WILDERNESS



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS(NONE)



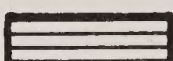
RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS



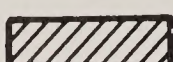
LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (NONE)



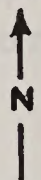
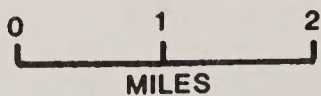
SPLIT ESTATE (NONE)



STATE (NONE)



PRIVATE (NONE)



of water sources to provide the sheep with dependable yearlong water.

In the Peloncillo Mountains WSA, there are no existing or projected surface disturbing activities, no valid existing rights, and no projected energy or

mineral exploration activities. Therefore, even without wilderness designation, the quality and level of the values now found in the WSA are not expected to significantly change.

The Peloncillo Mountains WSA contains moderate to high levels of biological and cultural resources. Any future development or disturbance within the WSA would be subject to review and approval by the BLM. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road.

The Peloncillo Mountains WSA primarily consists of desert shrubland and grassland. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road.

Other opportunities for study include the study of the WSA and its surrounding area. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road.

There are no known special features or values in the WSA. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road.

THE STUDY AREA

The Peloncillo Mountains Wilderness Study Area (WSA) is located in the southeastern corner of the Pinal County, Arizona. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road.

The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The Peloncillo Mountains WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road.

The Peloncillo Mountains WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road. The WSA is located in a remote area and is not accessible by road.

ROBLEDO MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 12,946 Acres

The Robledo Mountains Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-030-063, is located in central Dona Ana County approximately 8 miles northwest of Las Cruces, New Mexico. The WSA contains 12,811 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, 135 acres of split-estate land, and 640 acres of state inholdings. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The WSA is bounded by private and State lands on the north and east sides, and bladed dirt roads and topographic features on the south and west sides.

This WSA contains most of the Robledo Mountains, a north-south trending fault block. Lookout Peak and Robledo Mountain are the prominent topographic features in the WSA. Maximum and minimum elevations within the WSA are 5,876 feet and 4,800 feet, respectively. The WSA is characterized by rugged, steep canyons and southward dipping cuestas. Vegetation consists of grasses and mixed desert shrubs.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0 Acres recommended wilderness

12,946 Acres recommended nonwilderness

The Robledo Mountains WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). While the area contains the values necessary for study, they are not considered to be of a quality to merit inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS).

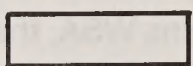
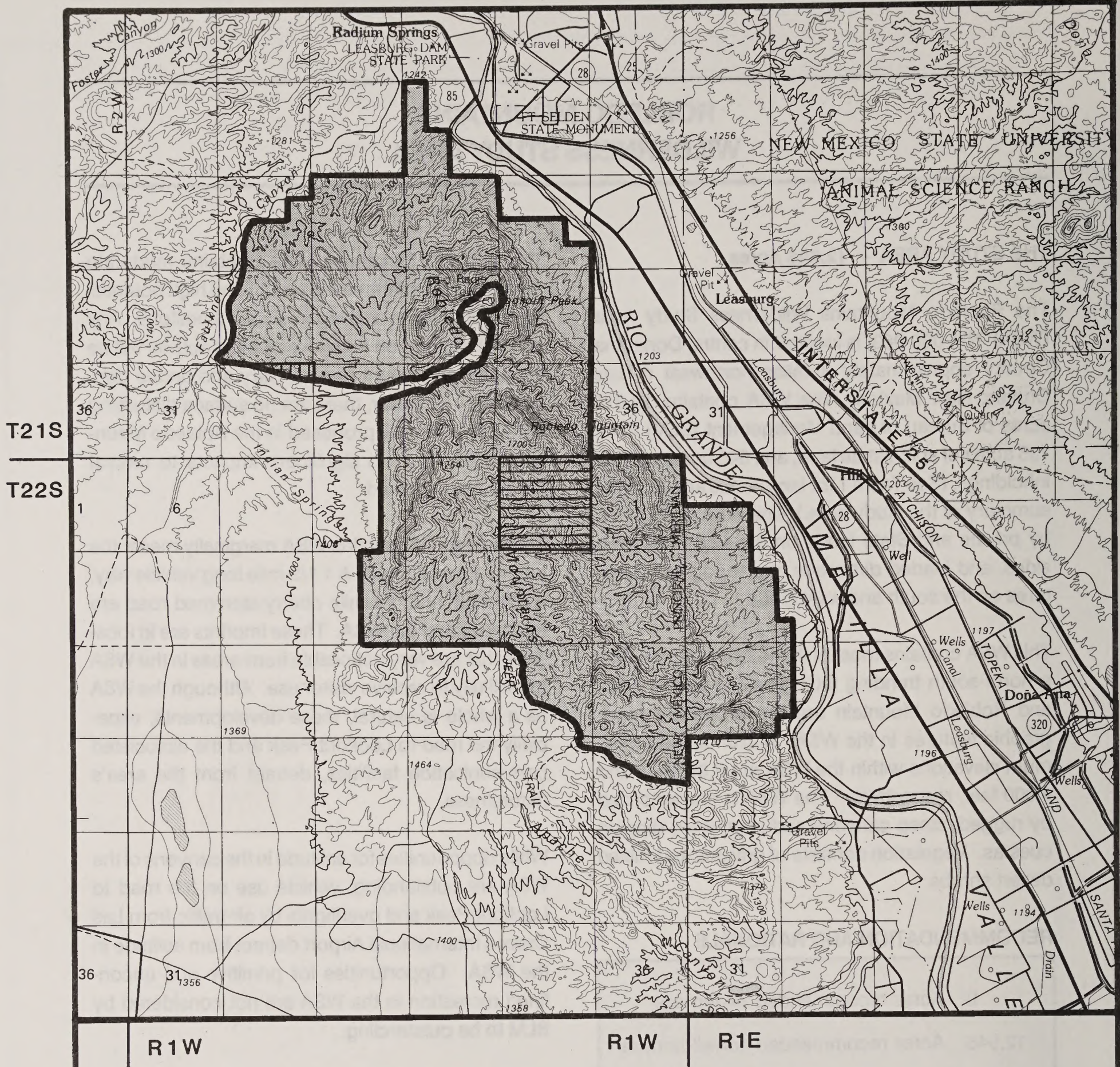
The Robledo Mountains WSA contains moderate resource potential for magnesium and high potential for building stone and high-calcium limestone. Any mineral exploration and development activity will be regulated to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation. However, there are no surface disturbing activities presently proposed in the Robledo Mountains WSA, and no significant impacts to natural values are expected.

The Robledo Mountains WSA marginally meets the naturalness criterion. A 1 1/2-mile long vehicle way, a dirt tank, and a 2-mile cherry-stemmed road are located within the WSA. These imprints are in locations that are very noticeable from areas in the WSA most likely to receive visitor use. Although the WSA as a whole is natural, these developments, especially the road to Lookout Peak and the associated communication facilities, detract from the area's naturalness.

While opportunities for solitude in the canyons of the WSA are outstanding, vehicle use on the road to Lookout Peak and overflights by air traffic from Las Cruces International Airport detract from solitude in the WSA. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation in the WSA are not considered by BLM to be outstanding.

There are no known special habitats or wildlife species in the WSA that would depend upon wilderness designation. In the Robledo Mountains WSA, there are no known or projected activities, limited mineral potential, and no valid rights of others in the WSA. Therefore, even without wilderness designation, the quality and level of the values now found in the WSA are not expected to change significantly.

MAP I



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS (None)



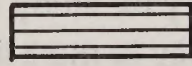
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
(None)



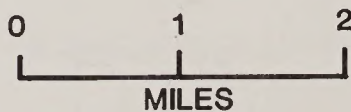
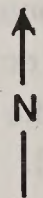
SPLIT ESTATE



STATE



PRIVATE (None)



Robledo Mountains Proposal

NM-030-063

April 1990

WEST POTRILLO MOUNTAINS AND MOUNT RILEY WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

THE STUDY AREA — 157,185 Acres

The West Potrillo Mountains and Mount Riley Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are located in southwestern Dona Ana County and southeastern Luna County. The WSAs are approximately 30 miles southwest of Las Cruces, New Mexico, and 30 miles northwest of El Paso, Texas. The WSAs contain 155,105 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, 2,080 acres of split-estate land, and 12,051 acres of State land. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) Boundaries are formed by maintained State, county, and ranch roads. Portions of the southwest, northwest, and northeast boundaries are bordered by large blocks of State land.

The West Potrillo Mountains WSA contain some 48 volcanic cones concentrated in a north-south orientation through the center of the WSA. The peaks range in elevation up to 5,400 feet. Broad plains slope gently to the east and west away from the central mountain chain. Wide basins surrounded by volcanic cones are found in the central portion of the WSA.

The Mount Riley WSA contains three high, steep intrusive peaks clustered together east of the West Potrillo Mountains. The highest peak, Mount Riley, reaches an elevation of nearly 6,000 feet. Prominent talus slopes and alluvial fans surround the base of the peak.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

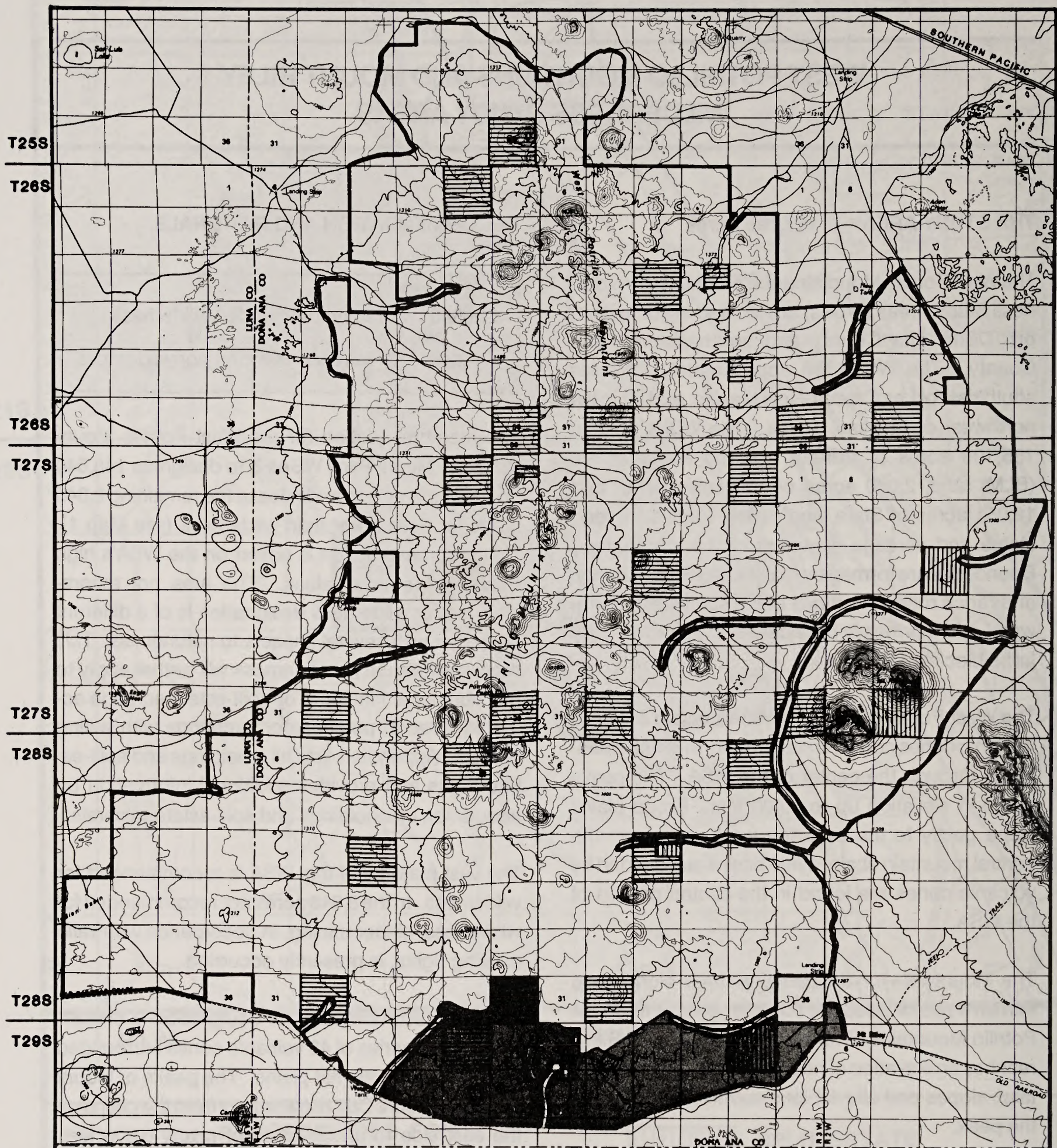
148,540	Acres recommended wilderness
8,645	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The recommendation for the West Potrillo Mountains and Mount Riley WSAs is to designate 148,540 acres as wilderness and release the remaining 8,645 acres for uses other than wilderness (see Map 1). This recommendation is based on the WSA's high quality wilderness values. The area not recommended for wilderness designation is of a different character with several impacts to naturalness. This recommendation for wilderness will further apply to any additional inholding or split-estate acreage acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners. Appendix 1 lists all inholdings and split-estate tracts and provides additional information on acquisition of inholdings and split-estate minerals.

The vast majority of this WSA is recommended for wilderness. In the 8,645 acres not recommended for wilderness, cinder mining, in accordance with valid existing rights, is presently occurring.

The area recommended for designation is characterized by a series of 48 volcanic cones surrounded by broad, relatively flat plains. The peaks of Mount Riley and Mount Cox rise abruptly from the plains on the east side to an elevation of nearly 6,000 feet.

MAP 1



R5W

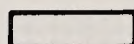
R4W

R4W

R3W

R3W

R2W



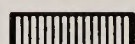
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS



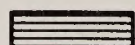
RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS



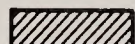
LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None)



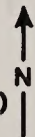
SPLIT ESTATE



STATE



PRIVATE (None)



West Potrillo Mountains / Mount Riley Proposal

NM-030-062



April 1990

These peaks form a strong focal point for the eastern edge of the area recommended for wilderness.

One of the most significant factors for recommending wilderness designation is the area's large size. This is the largest relatively undisturbed and expansive stretch of Chihuahuan Desert in New Mexico. The size, land configuration, and varied topography provide outstanding opportunities for solitude as well as numerous, varied, and outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

The area's size also contributes to its significance for wildlife. Raptors are common in the area especially during the winter. Golden eagles, great horned owls, and Swainson hawks nest in the WSA. On several occasions, peregrine falcons have been reported.

The area recommended for wilderness can be managed to preserve the quality of the wilderness characteristics. Most of the boundaries follow roads and are, therefore, easily identified. The topography and vegetation of the area and the absence of conflicting land uses or private rights would allow the BLM to manage the area to ensure its preservation and use as wilderness in an unimpaired condition.

The conflicts with other resources in the area are limited. Grazing use will be allowed to continue, but maintenance requirements on existing rangeland improvements are minimal and no new projects would be foregone.

The southwest portion of the WSA was rated by BLM Geologists as having moderate potential for oil and gas. However, a more recent evaluation of the mineral potential by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the Bureau of Mines concluded that this area has a low potential for oil and gas.

The 8,645 acres not recommended for wilderness designation are of a different physical character and have less wilderness quality than the area recommended for wilderness designation. This area contains numerous impacts to naturalness, including 5 miles of cherry-stemmed roads, impacts from past cinder mining, and impacts from the current operation of an ongoing cinder mine on one of the Chaparral cinder claims. This operation is located in the center of the area recommended for nonwilderness use. Mining has occurred on these claims since the early 1950's and it is expected that operations will expand to adjacent undeveloped mining claims in the future.

The recommendation would also exclude three cherry-stemmed roads, 1,280 acres of State land, and 640 acres of split-estate. Two of the three cherry-stemmed roads form a portion of the boundary between the area recommended for wilderness designation and that recommended for nonwilderness use. The remainder of the boundary follows a fence, section lines, and topographic features.

BROKEOFF MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 31,606 Acres

The Brokeoff Mountains Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-030-112, is located in the southeastern corner of Otero County, New Mexico, approximately 50 miles southwest of Carlsbad, New Mexico. The WSA contains 31,606 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and 1,840 acres of State inholdings. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The eastern boundary is formed by bladed dirt roads. The northern and western boundaries are along section lands. The southern boundary is formed by State land and the Texas State line and adjoins a portion of the Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

The WSA consists of a desert mountain range which follows a north-south trend and abuts the southwestern wall of the Guadalupe Escarpment near the New Mexico-Texas State line. The range gradually ascends from an average height of 4,600 feet in the northern half of the WSA to a high point of 6,550 feet on Cutoff Ridge.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0	Acres recommended wilderness
31,606	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The Brokeoff Mountains WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). This recommendation is based on strong local public opposition to wilderness, the availability of other wilderness lands in the regional area, and the localized impacts to naturalness resulting from the presence of rangeland developments.

There are no known or projected surface disturbing activities for the WSA and no significant impacts to natural values are expected.

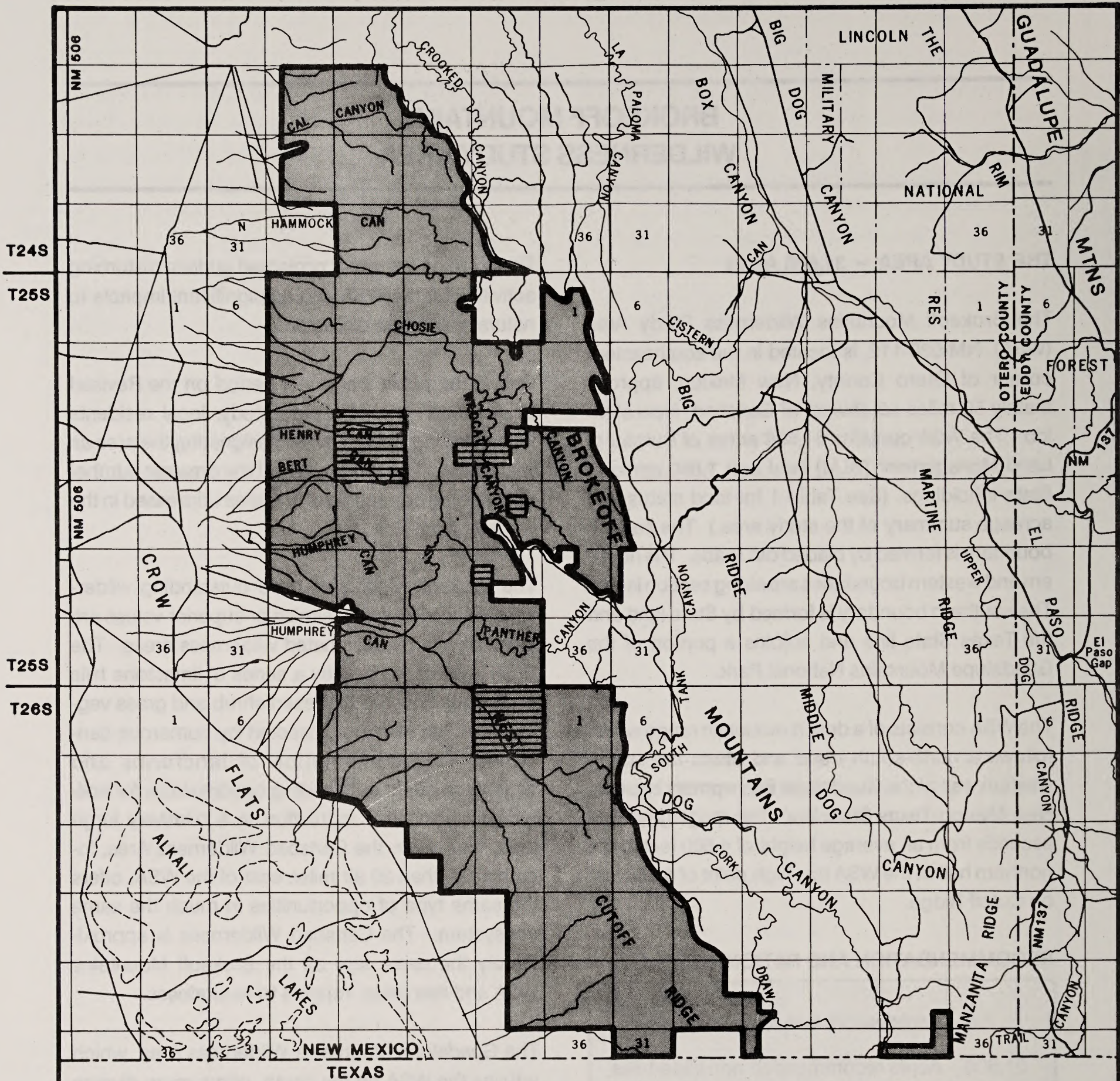
During the public comment period on the Revised Draft EIS on the Statewide study, local residents voiced strong opposition to designating the area as wilderness. The WSA received the greatest number of opposing comments of any area addressed in the Revised Draft EIS.

The Brokeoff Mountains have outstanding wilderness values; however, similar or superior values are found in nearby designated wilderness areas. The WSA is characterized by a series of limestone hills and ridges covered by desert shrub and grass vegetation. The hills are dissected by numerous canyons. This combination of landforms and vegetation offers outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in a relatively large area. However, the Carlsbad Wilderness Area, located less than 20 air miles east of the WSA, offers the same type of opportunities in much the same ecosystem. The Carlsbad Wilderness is approximately the same size as the Brokeoff Mountains WSA and has fewer impacts to naturalness.

The Guadalupe Mountains Wilderness Area, which adjoins the WSA on the south, offers more diverse opportunities for primitive recreation than that found in the WSA.

Although the Brokeoff Mountains generally appear natural, the naturalness is locally impacted by a number of rangeland developments including 5 metal storage tanks, 4 dirt tanks, and 33 miles of sheep fence. The WSA also contains 7 miles of vehicle ways. Additional projects including 4 pipe-

MAP 1



R18E

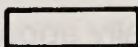
R19E

R19E

R20E

R20E

R21E



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None)



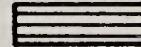
RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS



LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS (None)



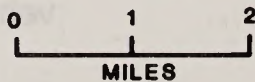
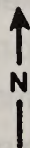
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE



PRIVATE (None)



Brokeoff Mountains Proposal

NM-030-112

April 1990

lines with drinking troughs, 1 dirt tank, and 2 1/2 miles of fence are proposed to be built in the WSA.

There are no special features, special habitats, or wildlife species in the WSA that would depend upon wilderness designation. In addition, there are no valid existing rights or minerals potential in the WSA. Proposed rangeland improvements would only impact naturalness in localized areas. Therefore, even without wilderness designation, the quality and level

of the values now found in the WSA are not expected to significantly change. While the area does contain wilderness values, similar and more diverse values and opportunities are presently preserved in the adjacent Guadalupe Mountains Wilderness Area and the nearby Carlsbad Wilderness Area. For these reasons, the Brokeoff Mountains is not recommended suitable for wilderness designation.

CULP CANYON WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA — 10,937 Acres

The Culp Canyon Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-030-152, is located in south-central Otero County, approximately 22 air miles southeast of Alamogordo, New Mexico. The Culp Canyon WSA includes 10,937 acres of withdrawn Bureau of Land Management (BLM) surface and subsurface land. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.) The WSA is situated at the north end of McGregor Range, a military reservation controlled by the U.S. Army, Fort Bliss, Texas. The WSA is bordered on the north by the Lincoln National Forest. The southern boundary is formed by a dirt access road maintained by the U.S. Army. The eastern boundary is formed by private land.

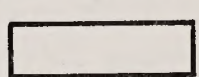
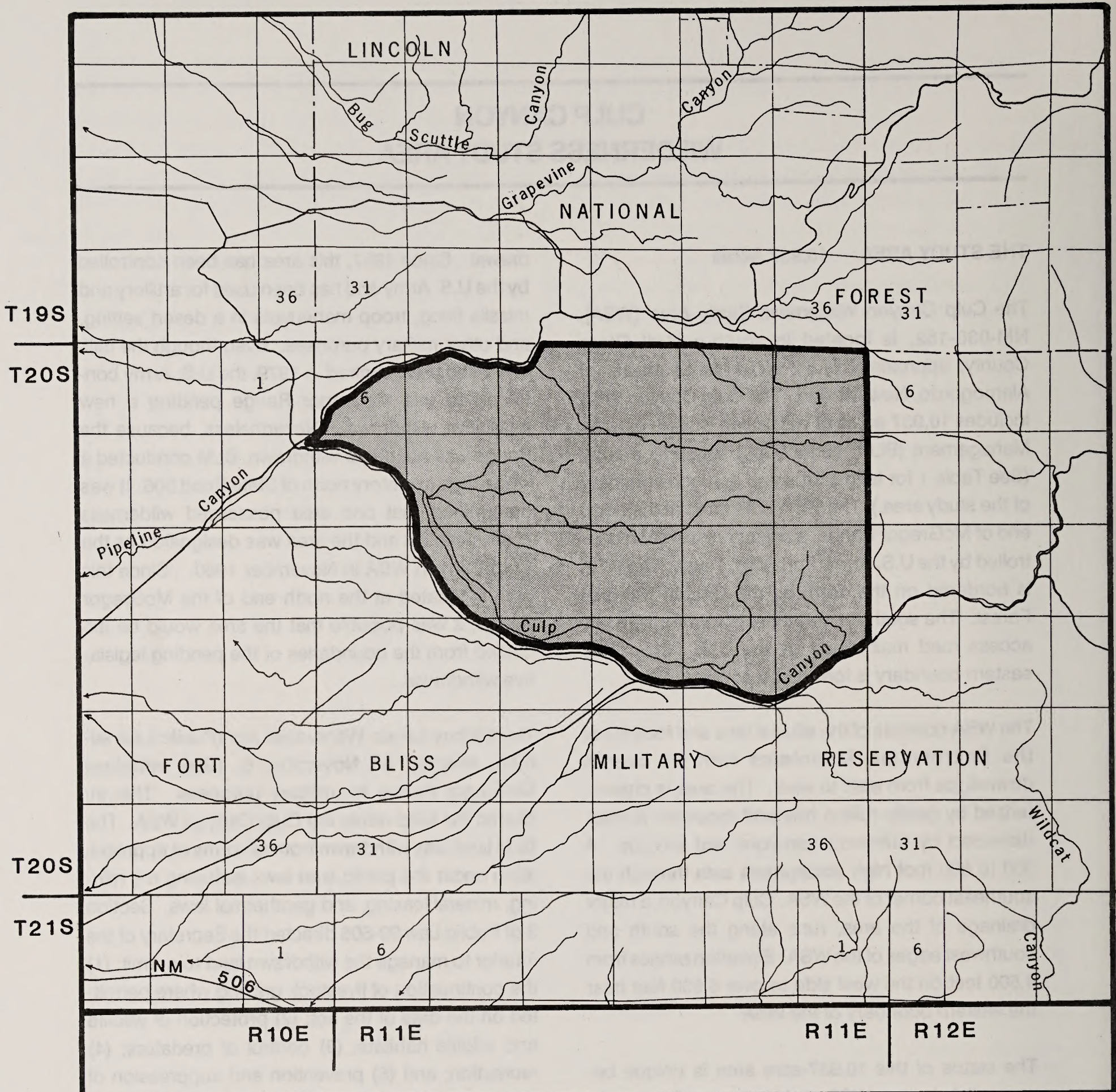
The WSA consists of the alluvial fans and foothills of the Sacramento Mountains with an overall downslope from east to west. The area is characterized by gently rolling hills and mountain slopes, dissected by numerous canyons and arroyos. A 300 to 500 foot high escarpment cuts through the southeast corner of the WSA. Culp Canyon, a major drainage of the area, runs along the south and southwest edges of the WSA. Elevation ranges from 4,500 feet on the west side to over 6,500 feet near the eastern boundary of the WSA.

The status of this 10,937-acre area is unique because it is both a WSA and under a military with-

drawal. Since 1957, this area has been controlled by the U.S. Army and has been used for artillery and missile firing, troop maneuvers in a desert setting, and other military purposes. Even though the military withdrawal expired in 1979, the U.S. Army continued to use McGregor Range pending a new legislative withdrawal. Nevertheless, because the Range was no longer withdrawn, BLM conducted a wilderness inventory north of State Road 506. It was determined that one area possessed wilderness characteristics and the area was designated as the Culp Canyon WSA in November 1980. Since this area is located at the north end of the McGregor Range, it was possible that the area would be excluded from the boundaries of the pending legislative withdrawal.

The Military Lands Withdrawal Act (Public Law 99-606), enacted on November 6, 1986, withdrew McGregor Range for military purposes. This included the land within the Culp Canyon WSA. The BLM land was withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws including the mining, mineral leasing, and geothermal laws. Section 3 of Public Law 99-606 directed the Secretary of the Interior to manage the withdrawn land to permit: (1) the continuation of livestock grazing where permitted on the date of the act; (2) protection of wildlife and wildlife habitats; (3) control of predators; (4) recreation; and (5) prevention and suppression of wildfires resulting from military activity. Section 3

MAP I



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS (None)



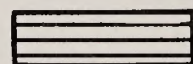
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



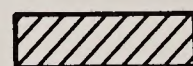
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
(None)



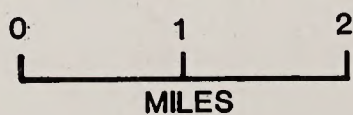
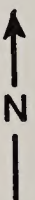
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)



PRIVATE (None)



Culp Canyon Proposal

NM-030-152

April 1990

goes on to state that all other non-military uses are subject to restrictions that may be necessary to permit the military use of the land. The legislation also mandated the continued management of the Culp Canyon WSA under the wilderness review provisions of Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0	Acres recommended wilderness
10,937	Acres not recommended wilderness

The Culp Canyon WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). The recommendation for the WSA is based primarily on conflicts with military use of the area.

There are no surface disturbing activities projected for this WSA. However, continued use of the area for military activities including troop training and weapons testing may result in surface disturbance.

Management of the WSA as wilderness would be difficult if not impossible because of military uses of the area. The Culp Canyon area is used by the Fifth Special Forces for training exercises. The area is also used in conjunction with testing new missiles and new weapon systems. Missile debris and targets are often recovered from the area. In November 1986, Congress enacted legislation withdrawing

BLM land within the McGregor Range for military purposes. These activities would impact the outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation offered by the area.

Although there are outstanding opportunities for solitude in the WSA, these characteristics exist primarily as a result of the remoteness of the region; the lack of special features in the WSA to attract visitors; and the military restrictions on public access.

In addition, primitive recreation opportunities are impacted by controls on public access. Public access is generally not allowed. Except under certain conditions such as public hunts, individuals must obtain authorization in advance from the Provost Marshall to enter the McGregor Range, including the Culp Canyon WSA. The Provost Marshall's Office is located 80 miles to the south at Ft. Bliss, Texas. Even if public access was convenient, better and more diverse opportunities for primitive recreation are available in the adjacent Lincoln National Forest.

There are no known special features, habitats, or wildlife species in the WSA dependent upon wilderness designation. Other than military activities, there are no projected activities, no provisions for mineral exploration, and no valid rights of others in the WSA. There could be some impacts from military use of the area but the overall quality and level of values now found in the WSA are not expected to significantly change.

CARRIZOZO LAVA FLOW AND LITTLE BLACK PEAK WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

THE STUDY AREA - 25,312 Acres

The Carrizozo Lava Flow, NM-060-110A-1, and Little Black Peak, NM-060-109, Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are located in Lincoln County, about 4 miles west of the town of Carrizozo, New Mexico. The Carrizozo Lava Flow WSA contains 10,408 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and the Little Black Peak WSA contains 14,904 acres of BLM land. The combined total of BLM land within the study areas is 25,312 acres. Inholdings are 1,280 acres of State land within Carrizozo Lava Flow and 1,706 in Little Black Peak. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study areas.) The WSAs are bounded on the north, south, east and west sides by private and State lands and manmade intrusions or physical features on Federal land (see Map 1). The WSAs were studied jointly since they possess similar resource values, existing and potential uses, and share U.S. Highway 380 as their common central boundary and legal access corridor.

The majority of the WSAs consist of the northern third of the Carrizozo Malpais, a recent lava flow in the Tularosa Basin west of Carrizozo, New Mexico. This flow is believed to be one of the most recent in the continental United States and has an estimated age of no more than 1,500 years. The WSAs extend over 7 miles north and south of the U.S. Highway 380, with a combined length of approximately 14 miles. Elevations within the WSAs range from 5,676 feet near the north end to about 4,000 feet at the southern end. Due to the young age of this lava flow, vegetation is sparsely distributed. However, vegetation diversity of desert shrubs and grasses is much greater than in surrounding areas due to the inaccessibility of the

rugged lava surface to grazing animals. The interior relief of the flow is extremely varied with steep-sided depressions, crevices, and pressure ridges of jumbled lava. Little Black Peak cinder cone is the most prominent topographic feature in the lava flow. Scattered juniper trees are found throughout the WSAs, with density of tree cover increasing from the more arid south end to the moister north end.

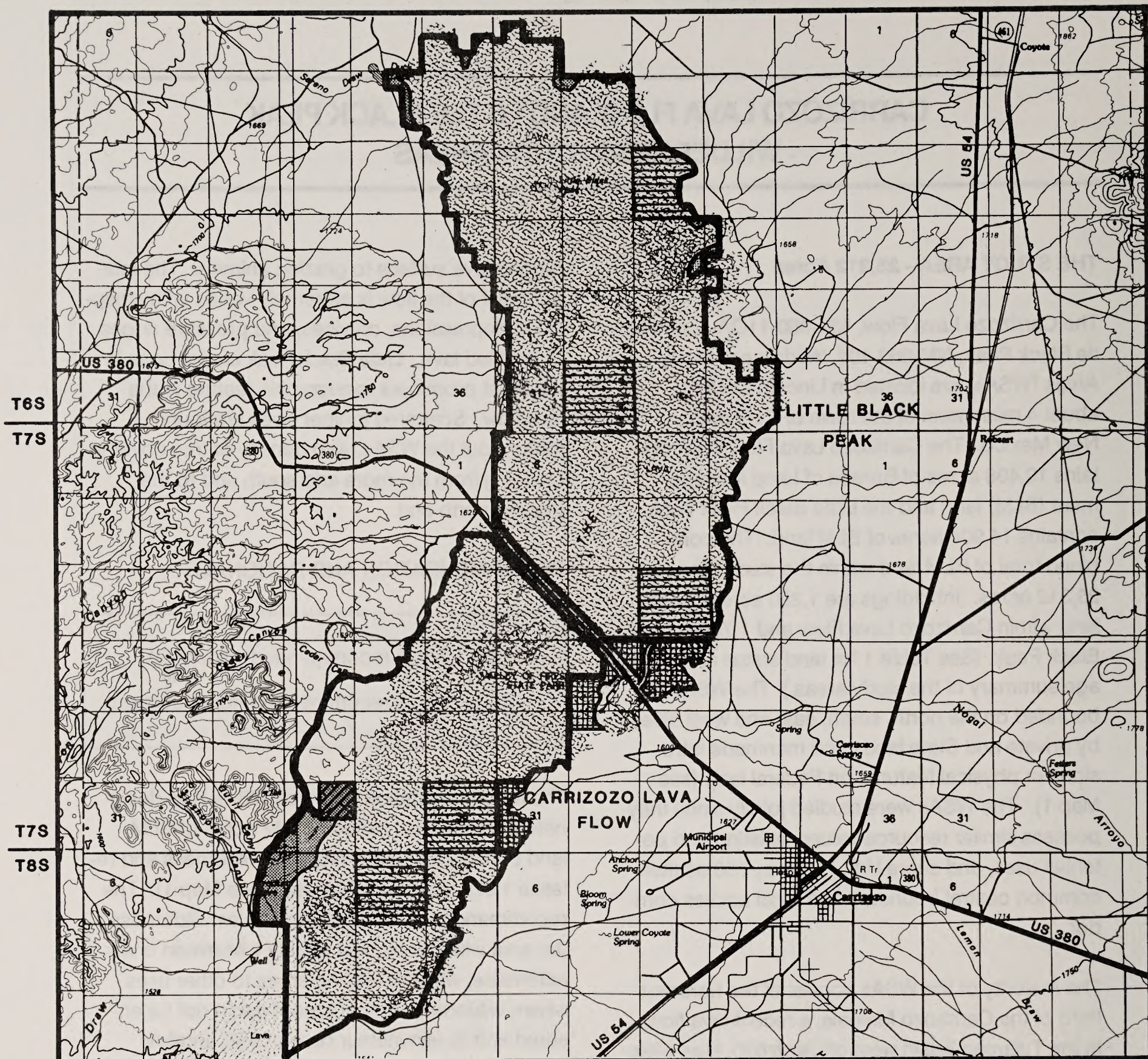
RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

25,084	Acres recommended wilderness
1,075	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The recommendation for these WSAs is to designate 25,084 acres, including 847 acres of BLM land contiguous to the WSA, as wilderness and release 1,075 acres to other uses (see Map 1). The recommendation would designate as wilderness the area with the highest quality wilderness characteristics, while re-leasing areas to other uses where wilderness management could not be ensured and to eliminate a conflict with another resource use. This recommendation for wilderness will further apply to any non-Federal inholdings acquired through exchange or purchase from willing owners.

The land recommended for wilderness designation includes the majority of undisturbed BLM land inside the WSAs. In most cases, where the lava flow edge is located on BLM land, the proposed wilderness boundary coincides with that readily identifiable landform. Only unmanageable areas of BLM land contiguous to the lava flow, and the corridor along U.S. Highway 380 are excluded

MAP 1

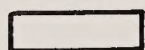


R9E

R10E

R10E

R11E



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS



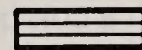
RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS



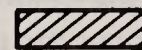
LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS



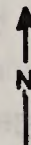
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE



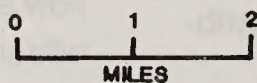
PRIVATE



Proposals

Little Black Peak NM-060-109

Carrizozo Lava Flow NM-060-110A-1



April 1990

from the wilderness recommendation. Conformance of the proposed wilderness boundary with the lava flow edge provides a physical barrier to incompatible uses, thereby enhancing manageability.

The apparent high quality naturalness of these WSAs would be readily perceived by the average visitor. In fact, the naturalness of the relatively undisturbed ecosystem inside the lava flow is one of the distinguishing wilderness qualities. Evidences of man are so dispersed and limited that an average visitor would be led to believe they were the first human to set foot on or observe the area. Naturalness of the proposed wilderness would be further enhanced since the majority of human imprints (except for rehabilitated mining claim intrusions) are excluded from the area recommended as suitable. Potential conflicts with expansion of U.S. Highway 380 would be avoided since the suitability recommendation excludes a sufficiently wide corridor to accommodate the proposed highway expansion.

Wilderness designation of the study areas would afford long-term protection of the highest quality wilderness values. Special features consist of the unusual diversity and density of vegetation species, melanistic (dark colored) races of rodents and reptiles, volcanic landforms, and stark scenery exhibited by the recent lava flow. Opportunities for scientific research and educational use of special features would be enhanced as a result of wilderness designation.

The recommended wilderness includes 847 acres of BLM land located outside the boundaries of the WSA's. In April 1990, the New Mexico Department of Parks and Recreation reconveyed the Valley of Fires State Park to the BLM. The 331 acres in this area which remain in a natural condition, as well as 516 acres of public land managed by BLM, add valuable lava flow property to the proposed wilderness. Wilderness management will be enhanced by including these lands in the recommended wilderness.

The area recommended for wilderness also includes undisturbed lava flow portions of non-Federal lands within or bordering the WSAs. There are 2,986 acres of State land inholdings which are proposed for acquisition under a voluntary exchange or purchase program. This land would only be acquired with the concurrence of the State of New Mexico. Land acquisitions are proposed for the purpose of enhancing manageability by eliminating potential problems with providing access to inholdings and allowing for consistent management of the lava flow landform.

Land that is recommended unsuitable for wilderness designation consists of grassland areas bordering the lava flow, alluvial plains, and low limestone hills at the southwestern corner of the Carrizozo Lava Flow WSA. In addition, there is a 600-foot wide strip of lava flow extending 300 feet either side of the centerline parallel to U.S. Highway 380 which is recommended as unsuitable for wilderness designation.

Removal of the grassland areas, alluvial plains, and low hills would enhance manageability by deleting areas with lower quality wilderness values that are susceptible to potential conflicts associated with vehicle use and motorized camping along the lava flow periphery. Five of the six existing motorized vehicle routes are in gentle terrain in this excluded area.

Removal of a 600-foot wide corridor of WSA land extending 300 feet either side of the U.S. Highway 380 centerline would eliminate conflicts with proposed highway expansion and would enhance manageability by deleting an area that is susceptible to incompatible human activities. This travel influence zone contains an unauthorized trash dump, roadside litter, painted graffiti on lava rocks, and debris from a recent homestead. This area also lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude due to noise caused by vehicles on the nearby highway.

LONESOME RIDGE, DEVIL'S DEN CANYON, AND McKITTRICK CANYON WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

THE STUDY AREAS

Lonesome Ridge	3,505 Acres
Devil's Den Canyon	320 Acres
McKittrick Canyon	<u>200 Acres</u>
Total	4,025 Acres

The Lonesome Ridge, NM-060-801, Devil's Den Canyon, NM-060-145, and McKittrick Canyon, NM-060-146 Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are located in the southwestern corner of Eddy County, approximately 41 miles southwest of Carlsbad, New Mexico. The WSAs include a total of 4,025 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land; the Lonesome Ridge WSA contains 3,505 acres, the Devil's Den Canyon WSA contains 320 acres, and the McKittrick Canyon WSA contains 200 acres. The WSAs are contiguous with the Congressionally designated Guadalupe Escarpment WSA administered by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The southern boundary of Lonesome Ridge WSA is contiguous with designated wilderness in the Guadalupe Mountains National Park. The remainder of the boundaries are formed by State and private lands, and by primitive roads on lands administered by the BLM.

The Lonesome Ridge WSA lies at the mouth of Big Canyon, a major drainage which cuts through the 2,000 foot Guadalupe Escarpment. Elevations range from 4,800 feet above sea level on the talus slopes to 6,825 feet at the ridgetop. The spectacular topography of this WSA includes sheer limestone cliffs, serrated ridges, and deep canyons. The McKittrick Canyon WSA is almost entirely on the western slope of the Guadalupe Escarpment. The Devil's Den Canyon WSA encompasses not only the escarpment, but also the mouth of Devil's

Den Canyon. This is an unusually deep canyon cutting through the western escarpment of the Guadalupe Mountains. The Devil's Den Canyon carries water following heavy rains. The perennial Devil's Den Spring is located approximately 1/2 mile up the canyon from the WSA on USFS land.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0	Acres recommended wilderness
4,025	Acres recommended nonwilderness

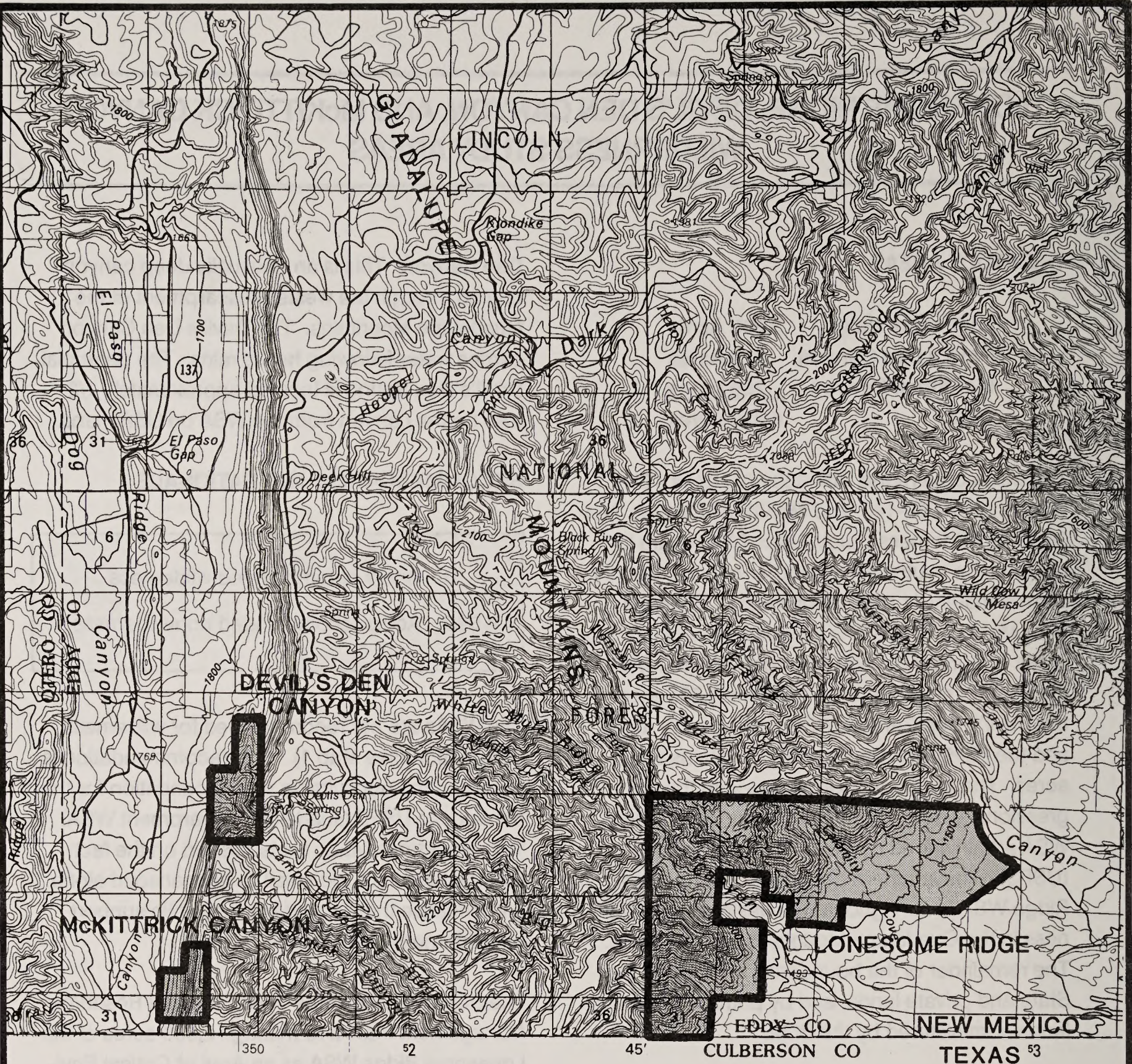
The WSAs are not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). This recommendation is based on the nonsuitable recommendation for the contiguous USFS Guadalupe Escarpment WSA. This recommendation is also based on the fact that the areas are too small to be managed alone and because they lacked strong public support for wilderness designation.

The BLM decision in the 1988 Carlsbad Resource Management Plan is to manage 2,990 acres of the Lonesome Ridge WSA as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern/Outstanding Natural Area (ACEC/ONA). The ACEC/ONA will be managed to protect the area's scenic, wildlife, plant, geologic, and natural history values. Planned actions include closing the area to mining claim location and mineral material sales, controlling surface use on oil and gas leases, and closing the area to off-road vehicle uses.

MAP I

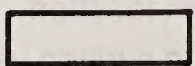
T25S

T26S



R21E

T22E



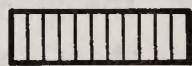
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS (None)



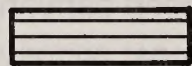
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



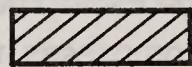
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
(None)



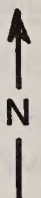
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)



PRIVATE (None)

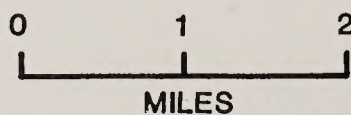


Proposals

Devil's Den Canyon NM-060-145

McKittrick Canyon NM-060-146

Lonesome Ridge NM-060-801

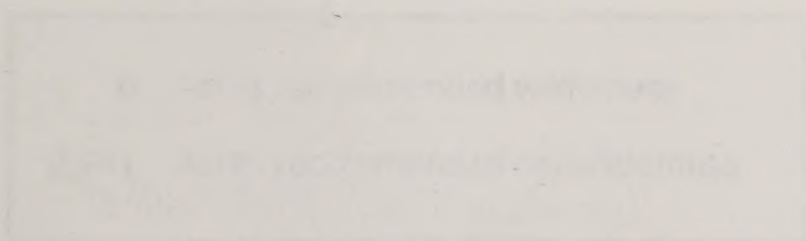


April 1990

Portions of the Devil's Den Canyon and Lonesome Ridge WSAs have been determined to have high wilderness values but are not recommended for wilderness, as the contiguous Guadalupe Escarpment WSA was not recommended for wilderness. In addition, the Devil's Den Canyon WSA was identified by the U.S. Geological Survey as having high potential for occurrence of oil and gas. The 200-acre McKittrick Canyon WSA was judged by BLM as having low quality wilderness

values and high potential for occurrence of oil and gas. In all three BLM WSAs and the USFS WSA, strong public opposition to wilderness designation was a primary reason for the recommendation not to designate the areas as wilderness.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE



The McKittrick WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation. This recommendation

The majority of the WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of the high potential for occurrence of oil and gas. The WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of the high potential for occurrence of oil and gas.

MUDGETTS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

THE STUDY AREA - 2,941 Acres

The Mudgetts Wilderness Study Area (WSA), NM-060-819, is located in Eddy County approximately 19 miles southwest of Carlsbad, New Mexico.

The WSA contains 2,941 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. (See Table 1 for land status and acreage summary of the study area.)

The southern boundary of the WSA is contiguous with a designated wilderness area in Carlsbad Caverns National Park. The remainder of the WSA is delineated by a combination of roads and private or State property boundaries.

The Mudgetts WSA is located on the northeastern edge of Guadalupe Ridge, which is a major eastern spur of the Guadalupe Mountains. Elevations range from 4,000 feet to 4,900 feet above sea level. Steeply rolling hills comprise most of the area, with steep cliffs on the western edge which drop as much as 500 feet to the floor of the Serpentine Bends of Dark Canyon. Dark Canyon and Crooked Creek drain the WSA. Both of these drainages carry water only as flash floods following heavy rains.

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

0	Acres recommended wilderness
2,941	Acres recommended nonwilderness

The Mudgetts WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation (see Map 1). This recommen-

dation is based upon the fact that the area is considered to have high potential for the occurrence of oil and gas resources. The BLM also believes the majority of the area cannot be managed as wilderness due to the presence of valid existing oil and gas leases which are held by production.

In accordance with a decision made in the 1988 Carlsbad Resource Management Plan, 1,480 acres of the WSA were designated as the Dark Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The Dark Canyon ACEC will be managed to protect scenery, caves, and threatened and endangered plant species. Planned actions include closing the area to mineral material sales, limiting oil and gas leases to no surface occupancy, and limiting off-road vehicle use to designated routes.

The determination that the WSA has a high potential for oil and gas was made by BLM mineral specialists based on current production, initial well tests, and known geologic structure status near and within the WSA. The WSA is surrounded by natural gas production and most of the WSA is leased for oil and gas.

The majority of the WSA could not be managed to preserve existing wilderness values in the long-term due to the presence of valid existing oil and gas leases. All six of the oil and gas leases in the WSA are held by production.

MAP I

T24S

T25S

T25S

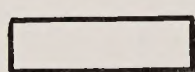
T26S

R23E

R24E

R24E

R25E



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS (None)



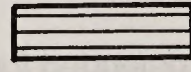
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



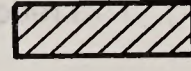
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
(None)



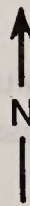
SPLIT ESTATE (None)



STATE (None)

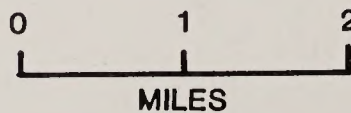


PRIVATE (None)



Mudgetts Proposal

NM-060-819



April 1990

